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VALUE AND  
ETHICAL OBJECTIVITY



# VALUE AND ETHICAL OBJECTIVITY

*A Study in Ethical Objectivity  
and the Objectivity of Value*

BY

GORDON S. JURY

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## FOREWORD

PROFESSOR JURY has, I think, made a real contribution to the solution of the difficult problem of the nature of ethical objectivity. As he points out in the Introduction to the present work, developments both in ethics proper and in general philosophy brought the problem into the foreground and made it central in current discussions. Few studies have, I think, grasped so thoroughly the nature and implications of the problem, and his own solution seems to me to be in the right direction.

There are two outstanding values which this study will have for the student of ethics. In the first place, the entire treatment reflects the new orientation in ethics brought about by its relation to general value theory and shows a thorough understanding of this dominant tendency in recent ethical theory. In this connection his analysis of the various theories of the relation of ethics to axiology will be found especially valuable. In the second place, his exhaustive study of the meaning of ethical terms is ~~much~~ <sup>much</sup> needed at the present time. In contrast to the superficial, and often dogmatic, pronouncements on this question, his careful and critical analysis is most welcome. He develops with clearness and skill the arguments for the uniqueness and irreducible character of the intensional import of ethical terms and discusses with critical care the question of their

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existential reference. In connection with the first point, his discussion of the relation of ethics to psychology and his exposure of the fallacy involved in defining the ethical in psychological terms is especially acute. In general, the impossibility of identifying the terms and propositions of ethics with those of any other science is conclusively shown.

Professor Jury's insistence upon the view that ethical propositions are not pseudo-propositions involves the entire problem of reference and verification. In this connection his examination of different "orders of reference" (or contexts), and his characterization of the order of reference of ethical propositions, will repay study. His suggestions for a theory of verification of ethical judgments in the last chapter, while not as fully developed as other parts of his theory, are nevertheless helpful. It is to be hoped that he will develop them more fully in a later study.

WILBUR M. URBAN

YALE UNIVERSITY, NEW HAVEN, CONN.

*November 1936*

## P R E F A C E

THIS book is, in slightly revised form, a dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Yale University. It is the outcome of a number of years spent in the teaching of Ethical Theory, during which the place of a critical logical enquiry has had a growing emphasis. The original stimulus in this direction I owe largely to a former colleague in the University of Rangoon, Mr. L. P. Saunders. My indebtedness to modern ethical writers will be obvious from references throughout this essay. I wish to make special acknowledgments to my teachers, Professor James Ten Broeke, whose humble, persistent devotion to the search for Truth inspired undergraduate studies in McMaster University; Professor D. C. Macintosh, Professor W. H. Sheldon and Professor W. M. Urban, of Yale University Graduate School, during more recent years. It was my good fortune to have the special help of consultations with Dr. Urban while writing the dissertation. I only regret that it does not more adequately indicate the great value of the influence of these teachers. As it is, I am well aware of the tentative character of the conclusions presented. However, they rest on convictions which, I believe, have sound support: that Ethical Theory

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should include an ideal objectivity which is non-naturalistic and which has logical independence of metaphysical premises.

G. S. J.

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*August 1936*



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## INTRODUCTION

IN making the general problem of objectivity in Ethics the subject of this essay it is proposed to discuss it under three main divisions.

(I) In the first place the general scope and meaning of the problem itself will be considered. The need of a science to investigate the objective reference of value-consciousness, and some indication of the nature of such a science, will be discussed in the first chapter. This will be followed by an attempt to show that it is impossible to separate the problems of ethical objectivity from those of Axiology and the objectivity of values in general. In the third chapter the meaning of "objectivity" in Ethics will be considered and will be shown to involve two main problems: that of the intensional import of ethical terms and propositions, and that of the existential reality of ethical objects.

(II) A second section will be devoted to the first of these main problems, namely, the general problem of intensional import in Ethics. In the fourth chapter it will be argued that the distinctive import of that which is predicated in ethical propositions makes it impossible to identify ethical terms or propositions with those of any other science, and in the fifth chapter this contention will be supported by an examination of different orders of reference in terms of which attempts have been made to define ethical import.

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It will be argued that this import cannot be defined by reference to physical or psychological facts or the rational process and must bear reference to an a priori order.

(III) In the third section, dealing with the second main aspect of the problem of objectivity, that is, the extensional, the relation of this a priori order to ethical fact will be discussed. In the sixth chapter will be considered the need of supplementing formal a priori principles with an a priori of content, and in the closing chapter we shall enquire how the ideal is realized in the actual and indicate how its objective reality is verified.

The purpose of the present introductory chapter is to indicate some of the developments of ethical theory through which the general problem of ethical objectivity has been formulated.

New developments in the empirical sciences in the nineteenth century not only transmitted to our own day a direct inheritance of scientific knowledge and motive, they also left certain oppositions against encroachments thought to be made by these sciences upon already occupied ground. This was most marked in the case of religion, where the protest was at first to a large extent an attempt to preserve the authority and authenticity of a tradition in behalf of an experience believed to rest upon its acceptance. More recently the emphasis has come to be laid upon maintaining the authenticity of the experience upon which tradition has grown up. There has been a shifting of emphasis from the attempt to sustain

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religious experience through an appeal to external authorities to the analysis of religion in its psychological and historical expression for the sake of discovering the nature of the experience which accounts for that psychological and historical structure. One effect of the naturalism of the new scientific point of view was thus to stimulate investigation of the phenomena of the religious life under the methods developed by the sciences. This effect was mediated, through the study of religion, to Ethics.

Amongst all other influences introduced into this modern era that of the evolutionary hypothesis stood pre-eminent. An immense success in the fields of geology and biology, coupled with emphasis upon the stringent use of the principle of causality, led not unnaturally to both a habit of mind and a logical assumption which tended to carry methods and principles found so successful in these investigations over into every sphere of investigation of human experience.

In religion the effect was both to challenge historical records and the early attempts at science contained in sacred writings, and to attempt to reach by a genetic method the origin and essence of the religious experience. This in its turn brought into question the moral systems given as part of the content of religious tradition and represented them as expressing the degrees of enlightenment of the periods in which they arose rather than as finally authoritative principles.

But in theoretical ethics this mediation of

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religious criticism and analysis was not necessary to effect a transformation in the interpretation of moral experience. There was direct application of empirical methods to the phenomena of the moral life itself. The doctrine that there had been a development of morality, as a system of conventions, was held to apply to the very nature of the moral experience itself. Moral experience was found to have roots in the primitive psychological and social life of man. It was found that it may be *descriptively* defined in terms of these psychological and social factors; hence the assumption that it is *in essence* definable in like terms. Under the influence of the assumption, made by Spencer for example, that the character of ethical phenomena which exist in the later periods of the evolutionary process must be explained by reference to their simpler beginnings, the essential difference between the conduct of the lower animals and that of man was held to be one of relative simplicity and incompleteness as compared with the complex comprehensive character of human behaviour. This offered the principle by which ethical phenomena were to be interpreted. There are exceedingly great differences in degree between primitive simple impulses toward activity and the intricate adjustments within modern society with its system of obligations, but apparently in the final analysis there is no essential difference incapable of description in terms of the simpler beginnings out of which the ethical arose.

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Upon popular thought the effect of such a point of view may be very marked. It may seem to justify the idea, which at times seeks justification, that the physical satisfactions which urge their claims so immediately upon us, determine the essential values.

But upon ethical theory the effect of such an emphasis does not lie in this tendency to allow valuations to be superficially immediate, determined by those experiences which present themselves with greatest psychological force. Such valuations would be erroneous if these values were, in fact, less than others which might have been obtained by forgoing the lesser. The effect of the influence of the evolutionary doctrine has not been merely to lead to error in judgments upon values but to strike out the idea of value altogether as an ethical predicate of unique character and to say, not that certain objects or experiences are *what* we value, but that natural properties are *what we mean by value*.

Another effect of the evolutionary view of nature was upon valuational proportions. The view of life as the direct creation of God within six thousand years of one's own time cannot be replaced by a conception of man as biologically and psychologically the result of an almost inconceivably long, intricate and largely impersonal process, without challenging current valuations.

But there was a more radical effect than this. A readjustment of values is one thing. A redefinition of value is quite another. It was a proposal

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to redefine value which the new naturalism introduced into ethical theory.

Against the naturalistic, relativistic tendency of this doctrine it was inevitable that there should be a revolt as there had been a revolt against the naturalism and relativism of Hobbes over a century earlier, by the Cambridge Platonists. And it was equally inevitable that theological considerations should play less part in the latter than in the former protest.

It was to be expected that a protest would be made in behalf of an existing philosophy so comprehensive as the Hegelian system. As "Prolegomena to Ethics" it was maintained that a naturalistic interpretation of reality itself implies the idealistic character of reality. A fortiori, ethical facts are inadequately explained as purely naturalistic in character. In view of the metaphysical presuppositions underlying all knowledge it is necessary first to establish the metaphysical foundations and then to build ethical theory thereupon. Metaphysics was thus regarded as of logical priority to Ethics.

From a standpoint still primarily and avowedly metaphysical, this order was reversed by some in the interests of the priority of Ethics. It was maintained that the examination of ethical data leads to a metaphysical view supported and enriched by its conclusions. Rather than that there should first be reared a metaphysical structure into which to fit the facts of Ethics, a consideration of ethical phenomena should first take place



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because of their significance in the formulating of a metaphysical system. The metaphysical interest remained an acknowledged influence, but rather one setting up an end in which ethical investigation was to culminate than a presupposition upon which it was to rest.

But a new weapon had been shaped which, in behalf of Ethics as an independent enquiry, turned alike against naturalism and metaphysics. Developments in logical theory introduced new methods into philosophical enquiries and at the opening of the present century there appeared a work which included under the common charge of "naturalistic fallacy" both the doctrine of naturalistic ethics and the metaphysical ethics which denied its validity.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of a Logic which had declared its own independence of metaphysical bonds, operated within two general points of view to support the claims of Ethics to an independent status. On the one hand a growing sense of the futility of Metaphysics led to the development of an independent investigation of ethical phenomena without either reference to metaphysical presuppositions or acknowledged interest in metaphysical conclusions. On the other hand it was held that, freed from metaphysical connections at the outset, Ethics might bring a distinctive contribution of fact which would finally lead to metaphysical conclusions. The work of investigators who had these two different attitudes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, p. 39.

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toward Metaphysics was marked by the same immediate concern. Ethics became for each a critical analytical investigation of ethical phenomena as the face-value of experienced reality.

Indicative of this new emphasis in ethical method Dr. G. E. Moore, in England, quoting Bishop Butler's "Everything is what it is, and not another thing" on the title-page of *Principia Ethica*, claims that a new attack must be made upon the problems of Ethics without allowing confusing entanglements with other problems. He writes early in the preface: "I have tried in this book to distinguish clearly two kinds of question, which moral philosophers have always professed to answer, but which, as I have tried to shew, they have almost always confused both with one another and with other questions." The last phrase is important, indicating as it does that not only have there been confusions within the proper field of Ethics, but confusions of ethical questions with others which are not ethical at all.

In America ethical enquiry was similarly directed. In *Valuation: Its Nature and Laws*, Professor Urban writes: "It has been said that the most fruitful metaphysical thought of the present is to be found in the special sciences. While perhaps not quite true, such a statement has this element of truth, that it is within the special sciences that the most significant questions of philosophy first make their appearance. Similarly, the necessity of solving certain special questions of value within the sciences of economics, ethics, and æsthetics, has

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developed concepts the significance of which extends far beyond these limits, and which therefore afford the material for more general and systematic reflections."<sup>1</sup>

This same need for primary critical procedure in Ethics finds expression in Germany in Professor Hartmann's *Ethics*, in the Foreword to which it is stated: "And only in our day, slowly and against great odds, the consciousness of a new phase in the ethical problem manifests itself, the supreme concern of which is once more the contents, the substance, of ethical Being and Not-Being." The task is "an analysis of the contents of values."<sup>2</sup>

That a reconsideration and criticism of ethical concepts is necessary both from a popular and philosophical point of view we have evidence on every side. In no other field of investigation will ambiguities have arisen so naturally as in Ethics. In the first place, whether or not other judgments are accompanied and influenced by emotional factors, ethical judgments have so generally been thus accompanied and influenced that much weight is given to the view that an ethical judgment is, in essence, an emotional experience or the expression of one. Then again there is the commonplace fact that emotional factors play an exceedingly large part in determining the content of ethical judgments. Not only do judgments arise out of a mental background with a large emotional content, but judgments arise most frequently in circumstances in which there is a large element

<sup>1</sup> P. 3.

<sup>2</sup> English tr., vol. 1, p. 15.

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of emotional experience. At the comparatively low reflective level at which many judgments are passed, the object toward which an emotional attitude is felt will become the object upon which judgment is passed. The times when men "sit down in a cool hour" to make valuations or to critically assess the values which they accept are a diminishing minority. It is to be expected that ethical terms will, in actual use, reflect the looseness of the emotional experiences under which they are unreflectively used.

But if Ethics is to be a science in its own right, judgments which are ethical judgments must be distinguished from the psychological conditions with which they are associated and the terms which mark their ethical character must be brought under survey. It is, therefore, part of the task of Ethics to recognize and seek to resolve such ambiguities as are due, on the one hand, to the emotional colouring given to ethical terms or to their explicit definition in terms of emotional experience, and, on the other hand, to the inadequacy of language to express the distinctions which exist in an increasingly enriched and complex moral experience. Where popular definition has been largely by type; where types have overlapped; where words with meaning gathered in one community have been translated into the language of another; and where terms thus evolved have been brought back for application to a body of social fact which itself is evolving, the chances are slender that there will be very

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general agreement in the exact meaning of terms even though the general field of their application may be quite clearly recognized.

That the need for an examination of ethical terms is found not only in popular but also in philosophical ethics is shown by the results of recent enquiries into the import of ethical concepts. As developed in *Principia Ethica*, the view to which Mr. Moore's doctrine of the sole logical priority and indefinability of "good" leads is that of "right" as a definable term referring to the causal relatedness of certain things to others which possess the intrinsic and indefinable property "good." A later analysis by Mr. Broad leads to the view that "right" is also indefinable, "a quite unique kind of appropriateness, just as red is a quite unique kind of colour."<sup>1</sup> This he follows more recently by the contention that "the rightness or wrongness of an action in a given initial situation is a function of its fittingness in that situation and its utility in that situation."<sup>2</sup> And the view that right is an "irreducible notion" is advocated by Dr. W. D. Ross<sup>3</sup> with the suggestion that Professor Moore himself has moved toward that position in his *Ethics*, since writing the *Principia Ethica*. An instance of a different nature is cited by Professor Hartmann: "Thus we can understand that happiness, although in fact only an accompanying phenomenon, has still in all

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Philosophical Studies*, July 1928, p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, p. 221.

<sup>3</sup> *The Right and the Good*, pp. 9, 12.

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ages of immature consciousness played the rôle of a universal form of the valuational sense—that is, the rôle of an ethical category. That this rôle does not by right belong to it does not detract from the force of the historical fact.”<sup>1</sup>

But in spite of all the ambiguities which appear there is a great body of ethical propositions which are commonly held to refer to a special sphere of human experience, in which phenomena have so marked a character as to have given rise to a distinctive terminology. While terms and judgments are not always consistently used within this sphere it is, nevertheless, so clearly defined that when discussion enters upon what may be called the ethical “universe of discourse” there is general recognition of the fact. What Butler adduced as evidence of a moral faculty we may at least adduce as evidence of a moral universe of reference: “It is manifest great part of common language, and of common behaviour over the world, is formed upon the supposition of such a moral faculty; whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or Divine reason; whether considered as a sentiment of the understanding, or as a perception of the heart; or, which seems the truth, as including both.”<sup>2</sup>

Whether or not this ethical “universe” must finally be regarded as a fiction, an intricate work of metaphysical art, or a plain order of verifiable

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. 1, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> *Of the Nature of Virtue*, Butler's *Works*, vol. 1, p. 329. Oxford, 1874.

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fact, the primary fact remains that it is a "universe of discourse" which is ours by common inheritance and environment. Those who claim that its facts belong to a world of fiction know at least what fiction they mean. But more is required than this general intensional reference. If objectivity in Ethics is to be maintained it must be shown that Ethics bears reference to that which is raised above the suspicion of being either accepted through credulity, or rendered unintelligible through speculative subtlety. And with regard to the status of ethical fact and its relation to the claims of other sciences that Ethics is a subdivision of themselves, it must be shown that they interpret ethical facts in a sense which renders their interpretation in the last analysis repugnant to the moral consciousness, and hence that these sciences are not really dealing with ethical phenomena at all.





*SECTION I*

THE GENERAL SCOPE  
AND MEANING OF THE PROBLEM



## CHAPTER I

### *Value-Consciousness*

IN opening an enquiry into ethical objectivity with a study of some of the implications of value-consciousness an approach is made which assumes that this consciousness, however it may be defined, offers the most favourable ground upon which to approach the more specific problems of moral-consciousness with which Ethics is concerned. It is the purpose of this chapter to indicate the nature of the investigation to which we are led in an attempt to follow to their conclusions the problems which this common experience presents.

Where differences of a marked character appear within experience sciences of different kinds sooner or later grow up with special reference to fields of experience so distinguished the one from the other. Thus when reference is made to objects as possessing characteristics given through valuation as in contrast to others given through sense perception, experience in the one case differs so specifically from experience in the other as to call for an independent science if that aspect of reality which is marked by valuation is to be explored and what that exploration yields is to be given systematic consideration.

The enquiry thus opened up may be approached from any one of several different points of interest. Valuation as a psychological process may be in-

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vestigated, as has been done in *Valuation: its Nature and Laws*. But, as Professor Urban has made evident in this work, this is really part of a more inclusive task. The psychological investigation both rests upon and leads into a more fundamental enquiry. Enquiry must finally be made into the conditions of *validity* of the valuational experience; for this is more than a psychological attitude, it is an appraisal of reality. In valuation we at least profess to be passing judgment, not conferring character. Some will, therefore, be led to carry investigation beyond the psychological facts in order to examine valuation under the assumption that the subjective conditions of valuation are not the conditions of the reality of value itself. To those holding this view a further field of enquiry is opened up which may remain closed to those who refuse to acknowledge any non-psychological problem and who maintain that valuation makes no relevant reference incapable of purely psychological determination and explanation.

(1) The psychological influence is shown in the view expressed by Mr. Bertrand Russell in 1927, under the guarded tendency toward behaviouristic psychology which marked his views at that date.<sup>1</sup> He writes:

There is a view, advocated, *e.g.*, by Dr. G. E. Moore, that "good" is an indefinable notion, and that we know *a priori* certain general propositions about the kinds of

<sup>1</sup> *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 238. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1927.

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things that are good on their own account. Such things as happiness, knowledge, appreciation of beauty, are known to be good, according to Dr. Moore; it is also known that we ought to act so as to create what is good and prevent what is bad. I formerly held this view myself, but I was led to abandon it, partly by Mr. Santayana's *Winds of Doctrine*. I now think that good and bad are derivative from desire. I do not mean quite simply that the good is the desired, because men's desires conflict, and "good" is, to my mind, mainly a social concept, designed to find an issue from this conflict. The conflict, however, is not only between the desires of different men, but between incompatible desires of one man at different times, or even at the same time, and even if he is solitary, like Robinson Crusoe.

Here Mr. Russell is evidently dealing with a concept which he finds it difficult to confine within the limits of desire and its derivatives. But his attempt to do so serves as an example not only of a trend in ethical theory but also as a comment upon the validity of valuation itself, as appears in the claim that "good and bad are derivatives from desire." The comment would be all the more emphatic were the general theory from which it issued more behaviouristic, but as it is, Mr. Russell's divergence from Dr. Moore makes it clear that a problem involving issues as fundamental to the general interpretation of reality as those arising from the fact of valuation and its various interpretations cannot remain purely a psychological problem.

(2) An answer to a broader epistemological

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problem is already implied when a decision is made either, on the one hand, to regard valuation as the psychological aspect of a wider investigation of value or, on the other hand, to regard valuation as without necessary reference beyond the psychological fact of desire or some other such state. Thus in considering the validity of a purely psychological account of the experience of value we are introduced to an epistemological investigation of valuation. As problems regarding sense perception are taken up into the wider problems of cognition, so psychological problems of valuation are taken up into wider problems of the relation of the valuing subject to that which is valued. Clearly the discussion of these problems will involve a consideration of the extent to which psychological explanations can exhibit the import of objective reference in valuation, as this refers to objects or events characterized by value, however that characterization may be determined.

(3) If this much be granted the way is open to a still more extensive science which will include the results of the psychological and epistemological investigations to which reference has been made but will also lead beyond them. A co-ordinating science is needed which will investigate the logical conditions, import and validity of the predication of value. It is to such a broad study of Value that the name Axiology has been applied ; a study which must investigate the presumptive reference of value judgments to existent goods as objective ethical facts.

According to certain views this reference may

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be dismissed since they claim that values are supernumeraries, idealizing projections of desire, not real assessments of the actual. But even under such a view the desired advance beyond the actual with idealizing anticipations of the future must at least be accounted for. The process of idealization, however imaginative, is not merely regretful imaginary reconstruction of the past. Even were it only this, in being regretful it would involve reference to a possible better. But in fact we are not absorbed in either retrospective or introspective consideration of the wholly actualized, past or present. We also engage in creative anticipation of the future. This anticipation reveals a new mode of thought incapable of being interpreted as desire anticipating a future which it is wished may happen. We anticipate the future and our relation to it under quite a different mode, that of "oughtness." Even were references to a realm of possible futures "ideal" in the sense of being incapable of being actualized, the fact that some futures are conceived as desirable above others suggests an order of preference which is a basis of judgment and cannot be dismissed as wholly non-logical in status. Psychological tension between desires is not itself preference determination. Valuation is too insistently significant for our whole relation to reality, and bears too much *prima facie* evidence of being judgment upon fact rather than reaction to fact to be interpreted as purely psychological in its nature, at least before other views have been weighed.

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To those who recognize that an issue has been raised which cannot be set aside by a purely dogmatic assertion of views there will arise a twofold problem, or, according to certain theories, two aspects of a single problem capable of being given a single answer. In this latter case when value is held to be defined by reference to an attitude on the part of a subject, one may answer the questions "what does value mean?" and "under what conditions does it exist?" at one stroke. Others, however, will find two problems involved: that of the import of value characterization, and that of the status of value itself.

In proceeding to discuss these issues, the three aspects of value theory which have been referred to, namely, the psychological, epistemological and axiological, will require more detailed consideration. Further reference to them at this point will, therefore, be introductory, but as it may serve to indicate more fully what the general issues are, and what is involved in ethical experience, I propose to consider at this point certain initial questions in anticipation of further discussion in the second Section, where the import of ethical judgments is to be examined into more fully. In doing so I shall consider further the relation of psychological and epistemological problems to the more general problem of Axiology.

(1) A preliminary question involving psychological data is raised by the not unnatural designation of qualities given through valuation as *tertiary* qualities. Especially from the standpoint



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of psychological accounts of value this designation is altogether apt. The suggestive analogy upon which it may rest ought, however, to serve as a warning that, unless this psychological interpretation can be shown to be acceptable, the use of the term "tertiary qualities" should be adopted guardedly, if at all.

The natural suggestion in the use of the term is that, as in the case of a secondary quality such as colour for example, there is a necessary psychical, subjective factor apart from which colour would not exist, so in the case of the tertiary qualities there is the necessary relation of an object to a valuer, not merely for valuation but for the existence of the value itself.

Indeed, that the subjective implications associated with "tertiary" qualities may be held far to exceed those of the "secondary" is pointed out by Professor Perry.<sup>1</sup> He writes:

To call the red of the cherry a mode of the activity or process of seeing, or of the sentient organism, remains contrary to appearances no matter how carefully these are scrutinized. With the so-called "tertiary" or affective qualities, however, the reverse is true. The more closely these are examined the more clearly do they appear to be either modes of attitude or impulse, and thus motor; or sensory *qualia* which are localizable in the body. They rapidly lose all semblance of that inherence in the object which becomes increasingly clear and unmistakable in the case of color. In short, the attentive effort at localization, whereas it unites the "secondary" qualities

<sup>1</sup> *General Theory of Value*, pp. 31-2.

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with the object, dissociates the alleged "tertiary" qualities, and tends to unite them with the sentient. It becomes less and less tolerable to speak of red or yellow organism, as it becomes more and more plausible to speak of one that is covetous, bored, tired, hopeful, enticed or delighted.

Thus the contention may be supported that: "A 'coveted book' is evidently qualified by a relation to subjects. 'Dull day,' a 'boresome meeting,' a 'tiresome place,' a 'hopeful situation,' are less evidently so, but the clarification of the experience brings us in each case to the identification of the quality with a specific reaction of the subject."

This, surely, may be accepted as obvious. But it remains to be asked: why coveted, dull, bore-some, tiresome, or hopeful? No enquiry need be opened as to whether *these* terms imply that someone covets, feels dull, tired or hopeful; but it may seriously be questioned whether this is all that is implied; whether these attitudes do not all imply reference to some more ultimate concept which is not merely a class name for them. At least a purely psychological interpretation of value must not be adopted as a presupposition even should the conclusion later be reached that such an interpretation provides its whole meaning and objective reference. Any suggestion that may lie in the use of the term "tertiary," that value as a tertiary quality is derived subjectively by some metamorphosis of qualities which are not essentially values should, therefore, be held strictly in abeyance.

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There is, however, another relation of a quite different kind by which the designation of values as tertiary may be justified. It may be held that as secondary qualities exist only under conditions of which psychological factors form a necessary part, so, objects of value exist only under conditions of which a priori factors form a necessary part. If such a view can be supported, then the designation of values as tertiary would be appropriate as suggesting that, as the existence of colour, for example, depends upon the existence of psychological conditions, so the existence of values depends upon the reality of a priori conditions because, as in the one case there is a psychologically constitutive factor in the existence of colour so in the other there is an a priori constitutive factor in the existence of values. But, as in the first case of the use of tertiary by analogy to sense perception, so its use suggested by this latter analogy must be the subject of investigation, not a presupposition laid down in initiating one.

There remains the still further question whether, in placing reservations upon the psychological suggestions associated with the term tertiary, the use of the term "qualities" should also be made provisional. Dr. Urban has maintained the view, which will be considered more at length in the closing chapter, that value is not a quality or property. On the other hand, Miss Clarke, in *A Study in the Logic of Value*,<sup>1</sup> contends that "Value defies definition just because it is a property

<sup>1</sup> P. 231.

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apparently attaching to a great variety of different objects that have no other common characters"; and that Dr. Urban's rejection of the property view of value would hold only if it were regarded as a natural quality.

As this brief discussion indicates, the question of the place of psychological data in a doctrine of value meets us at the very outset of ethical enquiry.

(2) Similarly, as has already been suggested, epistemological issues are immediately involved.

While speculative presuppositions must be avoided as much as possible, some reference to the general problem of knowledge and its relation to that of ethical knowledge will be necessary. It may be expected that the particular problem of ethical knowledge will partake of at least some of the difficulties inherent in the more general problem, and may also have some peculiar to itself.

(a) The first difficulty which this problem introduces arises from the fact that living ideas, to which final resort must be made in an analysis of the cognitive experience of objects, never can be the immediate objects of cognition. They are the knowing. The idea which is immediate in thinking is not the object of knowledge. When analysis of experience takes place the actual living fact is the process of analysis itself. We may analyse remembered experience, past ideas, and judgments. These may be made objects of thought for criticism. But ordinarily, living experience has

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other business. Ideas are its functions, not its objects. It is true that the process of thought presents ideas in relation to ideas, but its first function is that of objective reference to a system of collateral reality to which thought makes reference, outside the system of ideas within which it is related to other ideas. Ideas have become slightly morbid when they turn upon themselves in self-interest. Their normal "exposure" is outward and it is no less a part of the rationality of thought to be valid for experience and conduct through its objective reference than to be valid for purely formal conclusions through inference. In so far as thought proceeds to thought within the ideational continuum the problem remains one of formal validity only. But thought tends constantly to refer outside this order by means of its own objective reference, and claiming relation to an existent order or orders other than itself to demand that this relation should yield verifiable truth. Thus in its rational nature, the significance of thought lies in its capacity for entertaining propositions which, by definition, are either true or false. However satisfactorily the process of judgment and of inference may go on, at times deductively, it is the nature of ideas by their objective reference to demand a place in the process of rational experience for the verification of thought. It is a commonplace fact that we use thought primarily not as an exercise in formal validity, but as an instrument for the attainment of truth, of validity for experience and

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conduct. This is the case no less with ethical than with ordinary sense experience.

Now when verification takes place, involving as it does the possible communication of meaning amongst those having common experience, meaning itself is not directly communicated, ordinarily at least, in its essence, but rather through conduct patterns by means of which we interpret the thought of others. A complex system of symbols serves for the communication of meaning when more immediate intercommunication does not take place. Under these conditions symbolic definition by reference to psychological states and conduct patterns may fallaciously be held to express the essential import of thought itself. The "interest" doctrine of the definition of value through reference to the motor-affective aspect of life is a case in point. The semi-behaviouristic conditions under which verification takes place are offered as the intension of the experience itself, whereas that lies in the essence which is directly given in the experience and cannot ordinarily be communicated excepting as symbols arouse recognition of meaning.

(b) An epistemological approach also reveals another important fact. In every cognitive experience in the ordinary sense, there is an activity of experience as valuational. Whatever might be theoretically possible as a venture in wholly abstract non-valuational thinking we at least shall never know, for abstract thinking when it is attempted, is engaged in either for the sake

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of the use to which highly universalized formulae or concepts may be put, or for its own sake. In either case it is valued or it would never be engaged in.

Similarly ordinary thinking is a continuum of valuational references in the transition of thought from meaning to meaning. Cognition and valuation form a kind of interlocking chain which keeps experience from ever falling apart. Where, in any situation, cognition seems to have failed and to have lost its object, or even where knowledge has lost contact with the actuality of positive value, as in the case of extreme pessimism, value-consciousness nevertheless maintains the demand for knowledge. It is thus a continuous strand in the chain of experience and an a priori motive in experience. There is for human beings a final significance in knowing. It is our grasp upon reality, by which we are not only receptively but creatively a part of it. Knowledge is thus utilitarian. But it is more than utilitarian. Knowing is in itself a value which makes abhorrent the thought of escape from however torturous a world of fact, through however blissful a state of insanity. Over and above its utility, presupposing as this does the values for the sake of which we think and seek to know, knowing has its intrinsic value. Were it not for this the pessimist might under many conditions have the better of the argument. For, while memory and anticipation, as included in what knowing means to us, enter into the enjoyment of values, as in

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the case of pleasure, they also enter into the knowing of disvalues, as in the case of pain. Many would no doubt agree, with profound feeling, that that form of anguish known as *mal de mer* is not merely consciousness of certain physical facts but the conviction that a state of everlasting damnation has been reached. Still we would not consent to accept the status of animals for the sake of having pains robbed of their intensity in being reduced to mere sharpness, as is probably the case with animals which lack the comprehensive inclusion in present experience of memory of the past and anticipation of the future, which gives pain its great intensity for human consciousness.

(c) Furthermore, it may be shown that thought is doubly selective. In the first place it is selective of that which it values for its content, and again, at each step of the process of thinking toward conclusions it is selective under the guiding principle of value as this applies to truth. Truth is valued for the sake of values which knowledge enables us to secure, but also for its own sake as a value, and generally for both reasons together. Thus cognition, in the narrower sense in which it sometimes seems to be assumed that scientific knowledge is pure cognition, is an abstraction unknown in experience. We select the content of thought, we pursue knowledge through a self-activity which we value and we pass from stage to stage in the process of reasoning under the influence of a consciousness of the value inherent



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in truth. The cognitive relation is maintained because we value.

Were it not for the selective factor experience would become intolerable for man. In the realm of fact, of that which is offered for experience, much must be passed by; comparatively little of the whole manifold of the actual can be brought within the content of individual experience. Works of art are obviously selective interpretations and have their very significance in that fact. And human living is in its way a selective creative process in which, while we recognize the reality of many things we nevertheless deny their relevance to the values which, as we say, give life its meaning for us. Moreover, we are not only receptively selective but creatively so. In some sense reality will be what we make it. Not only do we admit into experience what interests us, disregarding many facts; but, in view of that which is fact, we constructively anticipate and seek to control the future.

Imagine two men in the welter of the advertising, display and crowds of a Christmas shopping expedition. For each man the whole selection pattern differs. One is the father of a three-year-old for whom he is to serve as Santa Claus. The other is a suitor anxiously wondering what may advance his cause. These two men in exactly the same local situation will in effect be in two quite different worlds. They are receptively concerned with almost entirely different sets of facts. But, this is in large part due to the fact that they are

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creatively engaged in two very different enterprises. Their present selective interest has within it their anticipation of a future situation which they are now engaged in striving to control.

Lest such examples of selectivity should be taken as evidence of the pure subjectivity of value relative to temporary interest only, it may be pointed out that an entirely different explanation of diverse selective interest is to be found in the actual diversity and wealth of values which are open to human experience, so that each in his own way and circumstance may have what can be genuinely value-for himself in that which has value-in itself.

Nor does the fact that selectivity exists guarantee that action under a selection pattern will determine even value-for, as would be the case were such a pattern the definition of value. This may be illustrated by an incident in *Point Counterpoint*<sup>1</sup> in which the author makes several comments relevant to the present discussion.

Spandrell, an ageing roué and his shop-worn companion, Connie, have driven out into the country and leaving their car have walked into the fields. The natural beauty broke as a illumination upon the woman. The man responded with obscene cynicism; "And raising his stick he suddenly began to lay about him, right and left, slash, slash, breaking one of the tall proud plants at every stroke.

'Down with them,' he shouted, 'Down with

<sup>1</sup> Chatto & Windus, London, 1928.

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them.' Flower after flower fell under his strokes. 'There!' he said at last, breathless with laughter and running and slashing. 'There!' Connie was in tears.

'How could you?' she said. 'How could you do it?'

He laughed again. . . . 'Serve them right,' he said. 'Do you think I am going to sit still and let myself be insulted? The insolence of the brutes! Ah, there is another!' . . .

'Damn their insolence! It serves them right. Let's come back to the car.' "

Selective reaction patterns do not determine values in themselves, nor even values-for. Value consciousness may, indeed, turn against established interest patterns—either unto salvation or to greater condemnation.

In the illustrations which have been given the selective interest which so largely enters into human life as value consciousness is seen to be a very prevalent factor in human experience; not by any means always determining the same selection, but entering as a factor; even capable of effecting pathological perversion. But, it may be held, these illustrations indicate only that in the more emotional reactions where, after all, values appear to be upon psychological interest levels, there is a factor which may be attributed to a unique form of consciousness. This factor may be less evident in the case of those whose "interests" are of a more rational kind—who are neither Christmas shoppers nor rakes. Yet, for them too value-consciousness is a prevalent element in experience.

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(d) That consciousness of truth-value is selective during the process of thought has already been pointed out. In a more common-place way than this, which may be regarded as irrevocably settled by the very nature of man as rational, the person given to intellectual or scientific interests must also make choices determined under value-consciousness. Relevance itself is not always unilinear. A fact may be complex enough to offer divergent lines of inference. Every scientist meets this experience and the demand which it makes that he shall not only face the facts, but face only certain facts. If he cannot know all the facts, neither must he know facts sporadically. To know enough of anything he must know comparatively little of many other things which might quite legitimately have been chosen for investigation. Then, also, a scientist's selection of his vocation, or, should that have been originally somewhat accidental, his persistence in his vocation, rests upon a decision for and against: for specialized research, against general but more superficial knowledge; for one field of investigation, against another. It is a selection based upon valuation. Were this not so his exclusion of many interests would be as purposeless as his inclusion of any. There are for him systematized gradations of interest; and if it be said that this means that we have in interests, then, final gradations making further reference to gradations of values unnecessary, the reply is that an interest *adopted* as a systematizing control in conduct is not merely

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a psychological attitude, and that we are not contending for a name, but for the concept under which interests are accepted or rejected; as indeed some *ought* to be rejected.

(3) However it is interpreted, value-consciousness is an exceedingly comprehensive and fundamental kind of experience. How it is to be interpreted is a problem the implications of which require to be exhibited in a science standing in its own right, as any positive or normative science stands in its own right. This conclusion is borne out by the fact that in common intercourse terms have come into use in what is ordinarily accepted as a special universe of discourse, namely, that of morals. Some indication has been offered of the nature of this experience, but the main contention has been that its examination carries us beyond psychological into epistemological considerations and finally demands an enquiry of a unique kind. This will include a discussion of psychological factors in valuation but must extend beyond these to the question of the import and validity of the objective reference in value-experience.

This chapter has been devoted to valuation in general. While the particular problem which we are to consider is the more specific one of ethical objectivity there is a relation between ethical values and values in general which makes it impossible adequately to discuss ethical objectivity without taking the latter into consideration. In the following chapter we shall enquire into this relation; the relation of Ethics to Axiology.

## CHAPTER II

### *Ethics and Axiology*

ETHICS is commonly held to be one of the normative sciences together with Logic and Aesthetics. That these do not divide the field on quite equal terms may, however, readily be shown. It is not any part of Logic to discuss morality or the place among other values of those values which are either moral or aesthetic. As a normative science its single value-standard has been held to be Truth. Similarly Aesthetics considers the single value-standard, Beauty. It is unconcerned with any problem which the normative character of either truth or morality raises. The case is different with Ethics which, while having its primary concern with moral value, must at least consider the normative character of truth and beauty in so far as moral conduct demands regard for them. When, therefore, the problem of ethical objectivity is raised there will be raised with it the problem of the objectivity of those values toward which ethical conduct is directed. This clearly does not mean that either Logic or Aesthetics must be part of Ethics, but it does indicate that the morality of persons and of conduct, which forms at least part of the subject-matter of Ethics, cannot be independent of the values of truth and beauty as, in some sense, the problems of truth and beauty can be severed from those of morality for separate

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treatment. In a sense in which moral value is not relevant to Logic, truth-value is relevant to Ethics. Similarly in the case of Aesthetics.

To Axiology falls the investigation of the general principles upon which all value rests. It must act as a normative adjudicator amongst norms. It is a science of value, while other normative sciences are sciences of that which has value. Ethics, concerned primarily with moral value, thus falls within the general field of Axiology. But the activity of the moral agent is never directed purely toward his own value. His own morality requires him to consider values lying outside himself. Ethical theory must take into account the fact that morality, as we know it, belongs to agents whose activity is at least commonly thought to have motives referring beyond the personal self. We cannot proceed far in ethical theory, therefore, without considering the relation of moral agency to values which lie outside the personal character of the agent. The present influence in ethical theory of the conception of "goods," over against which the Kantian doctrine of the moral good stands in contrast, indicates the predominating tendency for morality to refer to a broad field of values with reference to which conduct ought to be guided. This in its turn introduces the question as to just where the line of division between moral and non-moral values should lie.

The practical nature of this problem may be illustrated by the distinction implied in the claim that, although a certain act is wrong, it is, never-

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theless, right to do it if one believes it to be right. It is again revealed in the complexity of the problem as to what judgments should be passed upon an act which, though intended to produce evil, had actually resulted in good. Or again, what is to be made of the Kantian dictum that "a good will is good not because of what it performs or effects . . . but simply by virtue of the volition"? and of Mill's doctrine that "the motive has nothing to do with the morality of the action, though much with the worth of the agent"? To similar effect we may point to the fact that within the general range of our experience we value utilities, pet animals, the conduct of our friends, the integrity of politicians, big navies, and universal peace. What appears evident is that within the whole realm relevant to morals there are not only distinctions between values which are confessedly utilitarian and those which are intrinsic, but also distinctions of a radical kind amongst values which are considered intrinsic. If a distinction is to be made, based upon a division of values into moral and non-moral, assigning a certain part of the general range of values to special enquiry as the field of Ethics, two questions will obviously have to be considered: What is to be the principle of division? and, What relation will there be between values which are classified as moral values, and values in the rest of the whole field of which Axiology is the comprehensive study? It is to this general problem that the present chapter is to be devoted.



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It is proposed to describe theories of the scope of Ethics in its relation to values in general, comparatively, under three principles, as: Inclusive, Restrictive, and Exclusive Theories.

### I

By the Inclusive Theory is meant the view that the field of ethical enquiry is co-extensive with that of Axiology though its emphasis is focused upon certain values which it investigates with special exactness. This view will be considered with reference especially to two forms under which it may be held. It may be maintained (*a*) on purely axiological grounds without metaphysical implications, or (*b*) on axiological grounds with metaphysical implications.

(*a*) We shall first consider the development of a view according to which it may be maintained that moral values constitute a class which is non-axiologically determined, and determined without metaphysical implications within the general class of values, and that their investigation involves the problem of values in general, hence is an axiological enquiry. The doctrine of Dr. Moore, as presented in *Principia Ethica*, is to be taken as an example of this general view. But before offering quotations from his work, certain principles which will enter into the discussion will be given preliminary consideration.

Under this view no metaphysical motive is introduced and no difference in kinds of *value*

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is recognized. There is no intention either to use a metaphysical basis for Ethics or to anticipate a metaphysical result. The notion *good* or *value* is regarded as a simple notion and the whole class of values is recognized by this simple characteristic possessed alike in varying degrees by every value. Whatever differences exist must, therefore, be due to some distinction other than that between value of one kind and value of another kind. While there may be different kinds of values, that is, of existents characterized by value, there is only one kind of value characterizing existents as values. This being the case there is no basis for division amongst values by a valuational distinction in kind. It will still be possible, however, to classify values as existents by reference to other marks. A characteristic may define a class of objects of value though it does not define their valuational character. In the general class "values" which is axiologically determined, there may be a classification of values wholly non-axiologically determined. Moral values may be such a class. They may be distinguished from others, not on the ground that they possess value of a unique kind, moral value, but because they are objects of a unique kind possessing value. The term non-axiological will be used in this sense even though distinctions of *degrees* of value may have an influence in selecting principles used in classification.

An example from ethical theory will illustrate the points which have just been outlined.

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Rationality has been regarded as conferring ethical character because held to be the character of the ultimately real. In this case a metaphysical basis is given to Ethics. This priority of Metaphysics is denied under the view under discussion. On the other hand Ethics may be held to serve the ultimate end of providing data for a metaphysical doctrine and may be developed with that end in view. No such purpose is entertained in the theory now examined.

But rationality need not be used in a metaphysical sense in order to be relevant to ethical theory. It is the special characteristic of an exceedingly large class of objects with a high degree of value, namely, persons and their conduct. Thus rationality may define a large class of objects within the general class of objects of value though it does not define their valuational character and is, therefore, non-axiological as a principle of division. This is still true even though rationality has a value of high degree and is characteristic of a class of objects of high value. A characteristic upon which division is based may have a special degree of value without making the division axiological. The non-axiological classification of values, though quite innocent in itself, has introduced confusion into ethical theory because it has been credited with an axiological significance as defining value, to which it has no claim.

The interpretation of the following diagram will serve further to illustrate the principles which have been outlined. *Figure I* represents a scale

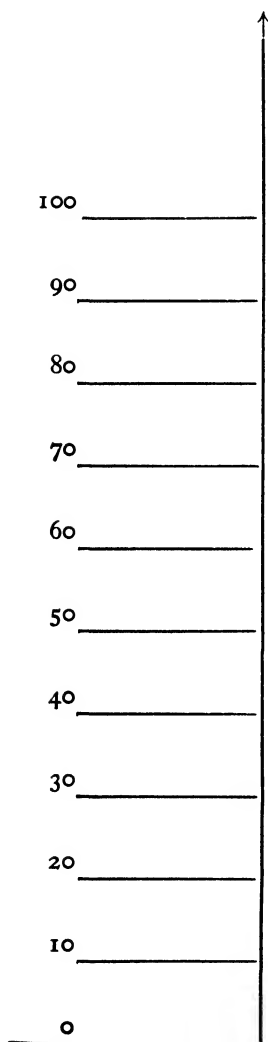
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by which all objects may be placed, either singly or in classes, in groups according to the degree of value which is assigned to them. *Figure II* offers a form in which to set down classes of objects determined under any principles selected.

Consider any list of objects which might be classified under the following heads: inanimate objects of nature, animate objects of nature, domestic animals, persons, the pleasures of persons, the psychological characteristics of persons, social communities, group activities. Such a list indicates the possibility of logical divisions of a purely non-value kind. Classes may be marked off from classes without any necessary explicit reference to value as a principle of division. Classes so determined may be charted in *Figure II* of the diagram. There would also be a general order of preference under which the objects listed in the classes referred to might be ranked in a series, according to their comparative values. Such a grouping would be determined by a scale of degrees of value as represented in *Figure I*. Now it is possible that a classification determined as in *Figure II*, and a grouping determined as in *Figure I*, would so correspond that it would be possible to superimpose one figure upon the other so that classes defined without reference to value would be seen to be co-extensive with groups having specific degrees of value which give them their places on the value scale. Should this be the case, as indeed it appears very obviously to be the case with the class of "personal" objects, it may

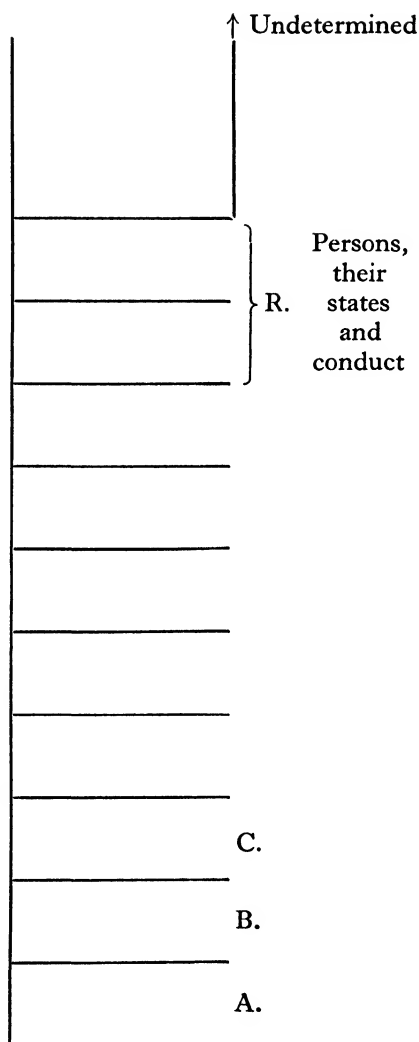
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*Fig. I*



VALUE SCALE.  
GROUPS DETERMINED  
BY DEGREES OF  
VALUE.

*Fig. II*



CLASSES OF  
EXISTENTS DEFINED  
BY PROPERTIES  
OR CHARACTERISTICS.

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be held *either* that we mean the same thing by value at whatever level or of whatever class it is predicated, *or* that there is an intensional distinction by which the term value when applied to certain values has a different meaning, is in fact a different term from that which is applied to other values. According to the first view, value, as characterizing values as members of an order of existents, means the same thing whether predicated of valued impersonal objects, or of conduct, persons or their characteristics. While there may be many kinds of values, that is, things of value, they are all characterized by the one kind of value. Value is an idea without any differentiations within itself. Values may be ranked in a series of greater or lesser, higher or lower, but any scale would be determined by the single undifferentiated idea of value combined with the idea of degree. There is entire singleness in the concept value however great the diversity exhibited in the classification of things valued.

This illustration has shown that values, that is, things of value, may be classified according to entirely non-axiological principles, while at the same time classes thus non-axiologically determined may be located as groups upon particular levels in the value series. Classes determined by non-axiological principles may be co-extensive with groups determined by the degrees of value according to which they are located on the value scale. One such principle, as has been suggested, has in fact exercised great influence in ethical

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theory, that of rationality. Persons, their states and conduct, marked by rationality, may also form a group so marked by its distinguishing degree of value as to be singled out for special investigation. In this case value, as attributed to members of this group, might for convenience be designated by some particular name, such as *moral value*, and all enquiry into this limited field of values might then be given a particular name, *Ethics*. In this case it must be noted, however, that no fundamental *axiological* distinction is involved, for no value principle determined the classification. Although a value distinction of degree attached to the particular group, the group was defined without reference to value. So far as Axiology is concerned the classification was arbitrary.

This view may be illustrated by reference to the diagram. Were the two figures brought together so that the vertical lines were superimposed, it is quite conceivable that some levels, 80 to 100 on the value scale, would correspond to some class *R* determined non-axiologically as a class of existents. In this case the high value attaching to it might make this class the subject-matter of a special investigation given a distinctive name.

But it must be noted that on any principle so far enunciated the correspondence discovered may be wholly accidental. The apparently great difference in value between the values of the group *R* and those below it, that is, between personal and impersonal factors, and all known lower values, may be due to limitations in experience, not to

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fact. The demarcation of the class *R* is made by a non-value principle and the naming of the values of this class "moral values" is conventional rather than essential. Under the hypothesis now being considered, namely, that the value series is determined by a single undifferentiated idea of value combined with the idea of degree, it may be claimed that while special interest attached to the investigation of values *R*, this is not due to any final axiological distinction. Therefore, in view of the general problem of value we must, at least at first, disregard the restriction introduced by this conventional limitation and must investigate the class *R* as a class of values amongst values from which they do not *essentially* differ, *axiologically*.

In such an investigation, analysis may reveal the fact that unique characteristics of persons such as rationality, freedom, pleasure, social relationships, are all valued and, taken either separately or in combination, have their places within the general range of values (80 to 100). Within this general class some especially valued factor would not unnaturally stand out for marked emphasis and tend to become regarded as *the* value according to which others are placed in scale.

To revert to the diagram: under the process just indicated, some characteristic of the class *R*, by which it may be defined existentially, may fallaciously be taken to define the *axiological character* of the class. Thus, because rationality



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characterizes the highly valued class *R* composed of persons, their states and conduct, it may be held that rationality *defines* value. This tendency will have added support if the defining characteristic of the class be itself something of high value, such as rationality. To use another example familiar in ethical theory; having carried analysis into the general class *R* and having discovered that pleasurable consciousness is highly valued, it may be held that pleasure defines value.

The nature of the fallacy in such procedure should be especially noted. Some particular property or characteristic which in itself is non-axiological has been valued and has then been taken as an axiological principle for determining the value status of the whole class which it characterizes. Having had its place in the value series determined by an independent value principle it is fallaciously made the determining value principle. This would apply to any criterion such as pleasure, rationality, will, self-realization, which had itself been discovered through prior valuations.

This process, which within a few pages of theory may clearly be seen to be fallacious, may have taken place unnoticed and most naturally during the course of millenniums of practice. Certain classes of objects which are both value-selected and also distinguished by other marks by which they are classified, may be so important that there will be a tendency to take characteristics which define them as members of the existential series

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as defining the scale by which they are placed in the value series. Thus, the defining characteristic of a group of objects, selected under the value principle and existentially defined, will be applied to the value scale as though defining the principle by which it is determined.

All such definitions stand charged with Dr. Moore's "naturalistic fallacy." With a fuller discussion of this fallacy we are not concerned at this point, but it is relevant to note here that the fallacy is due to the use of an *existential* differentiating principle as an *axiological* principle, whereas in Dr. Moore's theory there is no *axiological* principle by which values of one kind may be differentiated from values of another kind. In the absence of such a principle the whole field of values must, therefore, be considered rather than a special class primarily defined non-axiologically.

Bearing in mind the distinction which has been suggested between the grouping of objects in a series under a value scale and their classification by reference to existential properties, and also taking into account the possibility of using the principle of degrees of value without attributing differences in kinds of value to objects in the value series, we may turn to more specific statements of Dr. Moore's theory as they appear in the opening chapter of *Principia Ethica*. There he maintains:

In the vast majority of cases, where we make statements involving any of the terms 'virtue,' 'vice,' 'duty,'

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'right,' 'ought,' 'good,' 'bad,' we are making ethical judgments; and if we wish to discuss their truth, we shall be discussing a point of Ethics.<sup>1</sup>

But this he maintains falls short of defining the scope of Ethics, and:

If we take such examples as those given above, we shall not be far wrong in saying that they are all of them concerned with the question of 'conduct'—with the question, what, in the conduct of us, human beings, is good, and what is bad, what is right, and what is wrong. . . .

Accordingly, we find that many ethical philosophers are disposed to accept as an adequate definition of 'Ethics' the statement that it deals with the question what is good or bad in human conduct. . . . I may say that I intend to use 'Ethics' to cover more than this—a usage, for which there is, I think, quite sufficient authority. I am using it to cover an enquiry for which, at all events, there is no other word: the general enquiry into what is good.<sup>2</sup>

This extension of the field of ethical enquiry beyond that of personal agency further elucidates the scope of the questions which Mr. Moore has stated in the Preface to be the fundamental questions of ethical investigation.

These two questions may be expressed, the first in the form: What kind of things ought to exist for their own sakes? the second in the form: What kind of actions ought we to perform? I have tried to show exactly what it is that we ask about a thing, when we ask whether it ought to exist for its own sake, is good in itself or has intrinsic value; . . .<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Principia Ethica*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. viii.

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This latter statement would seem to make it clear that "good in itself" and "intrinsic value" are used as equivalents. "The good" is later defined as the substantive to which the adjective "good" will apply; it is "that which is good."

Further, "Ethics aims at discovering what are those other properties belonging to all things which are good." That is, it has a place for the classification of "goods" by non-value properties. This, however, must not be confused with the definition of good by these other properties.

But far too many philosophers have thought that when they named those other properties they were actually defining good; . . . This view I propose to call the 'naturalistic fallacy' . . .<sup>1</sup>

In view of these passages it seems justifiable to regard Dr. Moore as an exponent of the Inclusive View (I) (a), according to which ethical enquiry bears definite reference to the general field of value, and is independent of metaphysical considerations. The further principle has also been introduced in defining this view, namely, that there is no axiological distinction by which the lines of demarcation between moral value and non-moral value may be drawn. Were this not the case, and were the class which is generally recognized as moral values axiologically defined, enquiry into moral values and enquiry into values in general would stand in quite another relation.

<sup>1</sup> *Principia Ethica*, p. 10.

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(b) Quite another basis for an Inclusive Theory of the field of Ethics may be offered.

It may be held that any final distinction between the value scale and the existential order tends seriously to obscure the fact that the axiological principle is not only a standard by which the existing order may be assessed in value, but it is also a metaphysical principle by which reality has been teleologically determined.

The obvious reply to this contention, namely, that it begs the question in adopting as a principle what should be discovered as a result of the whole investigation, has its point turned if it can be shown to be true that existence itself is intelligible only as it is axiologically ordered. This means that the impossibility of defining value by terms on the existential side of the line is not due to their being finally independent, but rather to the fact that the axiological determination is prior, and this in a sense which makes it logically a priori.

From this point of view an Inclusive Theory of the scope of Ethics may be maintained because every value lower in the scale than persons and their conduct is metaphysically related to personal agency axiologically, as contributing to its value in contributing to its existence. All values which contribute to the existence of persons are thus related to the values of persons as individuals or as social communities.

Thus it is maintained by Professor Urban in *Fundamentals of Ethics*,<sup>1</sup> in exhibiting correspon-

<sup>1</sup> P. 124 (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.)

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dence between existential levels and value concepts, that :

Each level has its own concept, or category, of value, and as each higher level presupposes the preceding levels, but cannot be reduced to them, so also each concept of value includes or presupposes the lower, but its meaning can not be expressed in terms of the lower.

Now this reference to categories of value may at first sight seem to indicate that each different level has its own essentially different *kind of* value. But this is an unnecessary interpretation and, in light of the view held elsewhere in the same work "that in the very notion of value itself is included the idea of more or less value, in other words of degree,"<sup>1</sup> it seems clear that this passage may be interpreted to mean that categories of value are not value-categories in the sense of being essentially different value notions, but rather they are what may be referred to as "goods" categories, categories of existents upon particular levels of value but defined by reference to existential distinctions, not by axiologically differentiated concepts.

A reproduction of Dr. Urban's scheme showing Levels of Being, will make this clear.<sup>2</sup>

LEVELS	DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS	CORRESPONDING VALUE CONCEPTS
Hyper-organic	{ Personality and Sociality }	Self-Realization
Organic	Organism	Viability
Inorganic	Mechanism	Efficiency

<sup>1</sup> *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

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The value concepts here listed would, I think, be interpreted as highly significant instances of value, hence, concepts of that in which value is actualized, not that in which value may be exhibited as differing in *kind*, though characterizing objects which are different in kind.

The point of special significance for the question under consideration is this: all the lower values upon which the higher rest are to be included in the realm of ethical import because the realization of the higher involves the realization of the lower. The scheme presents a progressive axiological unity. Self-realization is the superior value attained through all others, not:

*in abstracto*—that is without including the satisfaction, fulfillment, realization of the organic tendencies, of the natural instincts of man. Self-realization involves the realization of these also. Nor does it mean that such self-realization is possible without satisfaction or realization of the social tendencies or instincts of man. The self is, as we shall see, essentially a social self. Self-realization involves the satisfaction of *all* these and more. For this reason the ethical good of man is said to consist in *total* self-realization.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, no value is irrelevant to Ethics which is involved in that total self-realization in which all that is included in being a person has moral significance. The glory of the end reflects its light back upon the whole process out of which it has emerged; it was really there "in the beginning." Here, as in Dr. Moore's view, a broad interpre-

<sup>1</sup> *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 125.

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tation of the perspective of Ethics is to be taken, but for a somewhat different reason. Dr. Moore demands a broad general survey because "good" is a logically ultimate idea which may be used as a selective concept in a general canvass of the whole range of experience. It carries no metaphysical implications into the survey—or at least acknowledges them only incidentally. Dr. Urban's view also requires the broad interpretation; for metaphysical implications permeate the whole series of values because there is an axiological nerve vitalizing the cosmic whole. This, as in Dr. Moore's doctrine, is a logically primary idea. But logically *a priori*, it is also metaphysically *a priori*.

## II

As in contrast with this broad inclusive view of the range of ethical enquiry based upon the theory that value characterization uses a scale of "more or less value, . . . of degree" for grouping values—"goods" and "moral values"—according to an undifferentiated axiological principle, it may be held that moral value is restricted to values of a specific class because of a principle of intensional division within value itself. This we may refer to as the Restrictive Theory.

Values were classified and defined in the first type of theory, it will be remembered, by means of a non-value principle. Objects of a special group which might be defined by a non-value property



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were also objects to which an especially high degree of value is attributed. They were members of a unique group of *values* but they were not characterized by a unique *kind of value*. Thus their definition was non-axiological, for there was no suggestion of an internal differentiation in the idea *value* such that the value scale of degree might be seen either to contain within it, or in some measure to have opposed to it, an axiological determination of values according to different kinds of value, moral and non-moral.

Should this latter principle of intensional differentiation in the value notion itself be adopted it will be evident that the relation of Ethics to a general theory of value will be greatly affected, for it will then be inherent in the very nature of moral value to effect an essential axiological distinction in the value order itself. A restrictive principle will be introduced into value such that moral *values* as a class may be defined by *moral value*; that is; may be differentiated axiologically, not merely existentially as in the first class of theories.

The isolating effect of such a principle upon moral values is not necessarily so drastic as might at first sight appear; for here again, ethical enquiry may be forced beyond the restrictive range of moral values if it can be shown that members of the class "moral values" are dependent upon non-moral values for their existence. This would in effect make the field of ethical enquiry practically co-extensive with that of those who hold the

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Inclusive View. But, it should be noted, a rather far-reaching principle has entered the field. While no a priori determination of membership in the class "moral values" would be possible by means of a scale of degrees of value, such an a priori determination might be possible under the restrictive doctrine of intensional differentiation of value. That is, while it would not be possible a priori to say that only persons may possess value of a certain degree, it might be possible to say that only persons could possess value of a certain kind.

The relation of moral value to general values does not, however, rest upon purely formal principle. It may arise out of the fact that the existence of moral persons and agency depends upon the existence of other things, and upon the reality of existence itself. Now this may be true for two reasons. (a) The existence of agents and agency is obviously dependent upon the existence of that which conditions their existence. Hence these conditions have an acquired moral significance. (b) But further, moral agency may require as its objective the creation or maintenance of values which are not primarily moral values. Persons may have their moral value enhanced, not by striving for its enhancement but by working for values which are not primarily personal at all. The existence of persons of moral value would thus be conditioned by their agency within an order of non-moral values which, while primarily non-moral, would, nevertheless, acquire moral significance as the conditions of moral conduct.

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Ethical enquiry would thus be carried beyond the field of primary into the order of acquired moral significance. This reference beyond the immediate order of moral values is made necessary by the fact that moral agency itself, with its unique kind of value, must always take place with reference to values, but not necessarily with reference to moral value. Indeed, Professor Hartmann maintains that moral value cannot be made the direct end of moral agency. His development of this thesis may be briefly outlined as it exemplifies the Restrictive View of the relation of moral to non-moral values, that is, the view that while there is a unique kind of value distinguished from any other kind as *moral* value, moral values are nevertheless related to non-moral values by an actual dependence.

Professor Hartmann maintains, "that the volition in a morally good action is not a willing to be good, but the willing of another good, and of a good in another sense, namely, of a situation which in itself is good."<sup>1</sup> This, he further holds, is not due to some metaphysical character attaching to personality which is such as "to prevent it and its acts from being aimed at as an object either of knowing or striving." Rather is it inherent in "the necessary non-identity between value and value—namely, between that of an act and that of the contents striven for in the act." Moral values "are not those of the contents striven for but are the qualities of the striving itself."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. ii, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

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Hartmann's argument here is not that we cannot act for the sake of that which is a personal state or act. It is not "that the object of an act cannot be an object of the same order, that is, not an act, not an attitude, not a striving intention—whether of one's self or of another person." But the object of an act cannot be its own moral character because the moral character of the act inheres in it *as* striving, and thus "it is not at all implied that with reference to any given action it is necessarily the same quality of value which must be in the intended object and in the morality which is realized in the doer—and that alone is excluded according to the laws of value."<sup>1</sup> Moral goodness may thus be the aim of conduct, but not the moral goodness of the act in process. This act in having moral character must have its object beyond itself.

In this doctrine Kantian theory is approached on one side and rejected on the other. The value of morality would appear to be unique in quality and to characterize the will in its striving, independently of its success. But contrary to the Kantian doctrine that moral good "can consist in nothing else than *the conception of law* in itself, *which certainly is only possible in a rational being*, in so far as this conception, and not the expected effect, determines the will,"<sup>2</sup> Hartmann claims that moral goodness is in the striving for values other than its own value, and the moral

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. ii, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Abbott's trans. *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, p. 17.

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goodness of the agent in the act of striving is incapable of being made the object of that striving. Thus many values which are primarily non-moral are morally relevant because they condition moral value. Hartmann's doctrine of the non-identity of values seems to be a genuinely axiological doctrine of differences in kind of value and not in degree only, in the order of values.

The doctrine of intensional differentiation of value as attributed to classes of value is explicitly developed in maintaining that "not all values which are ethically relevant . . . are on that account moral values."<sup>1</sup> "The end of an act is a situational value; its moral quality, on the contrary, is an actional and thereby personal value."<sup>2</sup> But, "Moral values presuppose other goods and the specific quality and worth belonging to them."<sup>1</sup> The relevance of non-moral to moral values, ethically, lies, therefore, not in the intrinsic ethical character of non-moral values, but in the fact that the moral values depend for their existence upon the existence of non-moral values whose worth is presupposed in the moral activity which has its own unique and higher worth. This dependence, Hartmann is careful to point out, is a "purely material, not axiological" dependence; for while the existence of the higher values is made possible by the existence of the lower, the value of the higher is not derived from the value of the lower. The dependence is causal, not logical. Thus, "moral goodness," as the specific quality of the higher,

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. ii, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

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“is something entirely new, something which was not represented in the lower value towards which it stands in complete indifference.”<sup>1</sup> Indifference to the lower for its meaning, not for its actuality.

While goods-values are thus essential to the realization of moral values and “there was some reason for including, as the ancients did, the theory of goods under ethics” there is obviously a restrictive principle introduced in Professor Hartmann’s doctrine which was deliberately omitted by Dr. Moore and specifically denied validity by Dr. Urban. Professor Hartmann finds the range of goods which lie outside personal moral values to be of incidental ethical relevance only because they are “conditioning values” upon which the higher moral values are existentially based. Thus they contribute to, but in no sense axiologically constitute the value of moral action or agents. The immensely greater ethical significance of “organic wholes” in which persons are factors does not make persons and their conduct alone relevant to Ethics, according to Dr. Moore. Dr. Urban conceives of the lower values as entering constitutively into the higher and thus partaking of the ethical significance of personal and social unities of which they are organic factors.

While the difference which has been indicated between the Inclusive and Restrictive Views is a radical one it is of less importance to the problem of ethical objectivity than that in which these

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. ii, p. 25.

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views agree. For whether analysis reveals a distinction within the concept of value itself, or whether, on the other hand, differentiation of value is found to be comparative only and based upon degree, all other principles of classification being non-axiological, the problem of the objectivity of value in its wider aspects has relevance to ethical enquiry as the morality of personal agency demands reference to values outside itself.

This may still be maintained while at the same time it is recognized that, as Professor Laird holds, "goodness or excellence in general is wider than morals, and is relevant to morals only when it is qualified in a very significant way." This he illustrates by happiness, which "is good and valuable, and yet . . . relevant to morals only when the pursuit or control or abandonment of it is in question."<sup>1</sup>

This statement seems to indicate Professor Laird's adherence to a restrictive view of the relation of ethical to other values. This, however, is not unambiguously maintained. His approach to the problem presents a contrast to that of Dr. Moore. While suggesting the identity of the concept of "oughtness" with that of intrinsic value, Dr. Moore's emphasis is laid upon the term "good" rather than "ought." That is, it is in its characterizing aspect rather than its imperative aspect that good is examined. Dr. Laird's primary emphasis is upon the imperative implied by value.

In *A Study of Moral Theory* he quotes with

<sup>1</sup> *A Study in Moral Theory*, p. xi (George Allen & Unwin Ltd.).

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approval the following passage from Mr. W. E. Johnson's *Logic*:

Each of the normative studies may be said to be based on a standard of value, the precise determination of which it is their function to formulate; in each, imperatives are laid down which are acknowledged by the individual, not on any external authority, but as self-imposed; and, in each, the ultimate appeal is to the individual's intuitive judgement.

"What I have to maintain," Professor Laird continues, "is that the normative character of these studies is quite precisely their moral character." For:

when logic is regarded normatively as an injunction to truth-seeking, the language which is appropriate to this normative aspect of it is altogether a moral language. . . . To think at all is to commit ourselves to truth's keeping, to accept its authority and its commandments; and this authority is self-justifying because of its proper excellence. The same conclusion follows when we admit the authority of beauty, and seek beauty for beauty's sake. . . .

What beauty decrees for its own sake it decrees morally, and the behests of truth are moral behests. . . .

In short, we are bound to maintain that every imperative, every normative injunction, is in reality moral.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Professor Laird maintains: "when we consider, not our own happiness only, but the happiness of other creatures, it is utterly monstrous to deny that there are hedonic imperatives enjoining happiness for happiness' sake."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Study in Moral Theory*, pp. 30-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.



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But, while these imperatives are unconditional, each in its own kind, "morality seems to condition these unconditionals,\* and to rule these sovereigns."<sup>1</sup> Hence while Logic, Aesthetics and the hedonic scale form spheres of investigation distinct from Ethics, the fact that each bears its imperative based on "excellence" links each to Ethics, as it also lays moral agency under obligation, and must have its appropriate place assigned in the order of values. The philosophy of value in its widest aspects thus has direct relevance for the philosophy of moral value.

While clearly inclusive in its theory of the relevance to ethical enquiry of all values because of their normative, and hence their moral character, the doctrine of Professor Laird does not accord with that of Dr. Moore and Dr. Urban, with regard to the intensive differentiation of value from value, in kind. Since Professor Laird finds the primary basis of morality in the imperative aspect of value rather than in the idea of intrinsic value, the conception of degree of value and even the distinction between instrumental and intrinsic value becomes either secondary or insignificant. And in Laird's theory there is evidence of the heterogeneity of values which is noted in Hartmann. Professor Laird writes, for example: "values of different sorts may apply to the same things"; "every kind of value entails an injunction which plainly is moral"; and, "moral values seem to have authority over all others"; "each of these

<sup>1</sup> *A Study in Moral Theory*, p. 54.

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classes of imperatives appears to be self-justifying, and each of them to be unconditioned within its own sphere." Again: "These divisions of value, in short, do not only differ in kind, but legislate unconditionally within their kinds. They are dominant goods each of which has its own and a sufficient authority." "The kinds of these imperatives may conflict."<sup>1</sup> But while in apparent agreement with Hartmann that there is an intensive distinction between directly moral and indirectly moral value, Professor Laird's conception of moral value and of its bearers makes his view of the relation of other values to moral value something different from that of Hartmann. Whereas for Professor Laird, their relevance for moral value inheres in other values by reason of the imperative which attaches to them, by virtue of "a necessary and synthetic connection between value and obligation in every instance in which the thought of value may be a guide to action,"<sup>2</sup> for Professor Hartmann, while the ought is essentially related to the submoral values, it is in this case of moral significance only as "conditioning" moral agency and moral values, which are possible for the personal agent alone.

In spite of the differences which have been noted, the four writers whose views have been considered agree in maintaining the relevance for ethical theory of reference to values which lie outside the intrinsic value of persons and their agency. There is also agreement, with differences,

<sup>1</sup> *A Study in Moral Theory*, pp. 51-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

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upon a doctrine which we have not as yet specifically considered, though its importance has been suggested in Professor Laird's emphasis upon the imperative character of all kinds of value. This doctrine, that there is an ultimate relation between the concepts "value" and "ought," is of more immediate importance for our problem than a solution of the further problem, whether this relation is synthetic or that of intensional identity. In either case, when recognized by a moral agent value is inseparable from an ought; it inescapably imposes obligation. But before adopting the view that the ground of obligation may thus lie in the logical relation between value and ought and thus be independent of the moral agent himself, reference must be made to the doctrine of the moral agent's ethical significance found in what we may refer to as the Exclusive Theory of the scope of Ethics.

### III

The Exclusive Theory would limit the field of ethical enquiry to moral values strictly interpreted as having to do with personal character and conduct on the "inner" side alone.

The classical example of this view is, of course, the Kantian doctrine that "Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a Good Will"; and that "A good will is good not because of what it performs or effects,

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. . . but simply by virtue of the volition. . . .” It has “its whole value in itself.”<sup>1</sup> The emphasis upon the value of the good will in and for itself is so exclusive that ethical relevance of the idea of value scale and of values as existents is left very largely in doubt, if not actually denied.

The cleft which the two critiques leave between the natural order and the moral order, if bridged at all will have to be bridged from the side of the Practical Reason. Neither can moral consciousness arise in man through his nature as a member of the natural order, nor can his moral consciousness be interpreted in terms of natural science. Material for a bridging structure cannot lie on that side of the chasm. No motive for an interpretation of conduct under the concept “ought” can arise within the order of existence as determined by principles of the Pure Reason, but the authority of this concept cannot be denied. Consciousness of an “ought” thus reveals a moral realm within which man’s will may be determined though his action takes place in the realm of nature. But having thrown the bridge across Kant seems never to have established commerce upon it. The evident need was for some explanation of how consciousness of duty could have reference to obligations in the realm of the actual in which moral action must take place. This explanation cannot be given if the actual has nothing within it by which an “ought” can be determined. It can be given if the actual is an order capable of having

<sup>1</sup> Abbott’s trans., pp. 9-10.

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characteristics which are non-natural and which ought to be realized.

Value takes the rôle of such a characteristic in the doctrines of the philosophers referred to as exemplifying Inclusive and Restrictive Views of the scope of Ethics. It is not intended at this point to pursue the problem of the relation between "value" and "ought" upon which obligation rests. It is sufficient here to record the fact that man cannot escape the necessity laid upon him by his moral nature of having regard both for what ought to be actualized and for the way in which his conduct may be related to that actualization. If, therefore, we approach the problem from the standpoint emphasized by Kant, seeking that which is characteristic of man's moral nature and finding it to be his capacity for the recognition of obligation, and if we learn from modern ethical theory that it is in the nature of value to impose obligation, it becomes apparent that the field of Axiology is relevant to Ethics because every kind of value places moral beings under obligation. The problem of value thus doubly becomes the concern of the moral philosopher. In common with every moral agent he is concerned to know values as these motivate moral conduct; as a moral philosopher his obligation to truth as a value carries his enquiry into the problem of the status of values of every kind.

That an investigation of the status of values is necessary becomes especially evident when the problem of the objective validity of value is con-

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sidered. If there be no ground for the objectivity of any kind of value, then clearly the objectivity of moral value must also fall. To many it would seem almost equally apparent that moral conduct would collapse if it were to be shown that the value of all non-moral goods is subjective and that moral conduct, apart from its effects upon character, is for purely relative ends, much as it is maintained that religion must collapse if it makes the psychological processes of the individual the end of religious observance. That there should be in the temporal order actual non-subjective goods of an ultimate kind is, however, by no means always regarded as necessary to morality. Even popular opinion often turns to some form of belief that the *real* values are intangible, of an eternal order. And there is higher authority. Kant's dictum comes to mind. No value is unconditional but that of the good will, the will under rational, not psychological laws. The will may be determined, Kant points out,<sup>1</sup> by particular impulses which are subjective conditions, but these cannot determine obligation—though they may determine conduct contrary to "objective laws" by which the will stands under obligation. Even the universal "natural necessity" of happiness which determines "a purpose which we may presuppose with certainty and *a priori* in every man, because it belongs to his being" can justify only a hypothetical imperative. There is one end, Kant says, "which may be assumed

<sup>1</sup> Abbott's trans., p. 29.

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to be actually such to all rational beings (so far as imperatives apply to them, viz., as dependent beings), and, therefore, one purpose which they not merely *may* have, but which we may with certainty assume that they all actually *have* by a natural necessity, and this is *happiness*.”<sup>1</sup> But even so, this law of *psychological* hedonism, though it applies universally to rational beings, does not arise categorically from their rationality. It remains subjective, relative.

Now under an extreme doctrine of the severance of ethical from other values, if moral character alone has moral significance it may be argued that whether other values are real or imaginary does not matter. A realm of illusory values would serve as well as objectively real values, if these are all stage-setting in any case. But the stage effect is thoroughly spoiled by the insistent claim of truth to be a value. Otherwise it might be held that even if the doctrine of the objectivity of value were false it ought to be maintained because it is necessary to morality. Such a contention is, of course, for the moral world, the Last Judgment. It denies the obligation under which truth places the moralist himself. But either directly, or through the imperative character of truth, the demand of reality to be experienced truly is, in some final sense, a demand on morality. With an unsuspected illusion Kantian goodness of will might thrive throughout life; and dead men tell no tales. But presumably a moral agent could not be so

<sup>1</sup> Abbott's trans., p. 32.

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immoral in irreverence toward truth—or in a perverted sense of humour—as to maintain the illusion of the objectivity of value for the moral value of the illusion; and were an illusion completely convincing its objectivity would never have been questioned. When a moral agent once doubts the objectivity of his values, however, he is under obligation to truth as a value to face the problem created. It is the sense of obligation which comes with the suspicion that there may be illusion that creates the problem of value-objectivity. Once this suspicion has arisen the moral agent has become a moral philosopher whose morality demands enquiry into the objective validity of the value which moral activity realizes.

An effort has been made in this chapter to show that no narrow limitation of Ethics to values which are immediately personal is maintained in the views of those who represent modern theories of genuine ethical objectivity. Arguments have also been offered to show that the problem of the objectivity of value in general is involved in that of ethical objectivity. With this in view we shall consider it justifiable to use the term “ethical” in its broader connotation in the enquiry which follows, and to include reference, as specifically ethical, to the whole range of values which place moral agents under obligation.



## CHAPTER III

### *Objectivity in Ethics*

#### I

#### *Objectivity and Empiricism*

THE claim made in the first chapter that the science of value has a right to a degree of independence which justifies its being regarded as a separate science, has indicated, but not fully supported, its complete independence of certain sciences which have frequently been thought to include it. It is not a priori impossible that Axiology itself should be the science of a particular field defined within some more general field. If it can be shown that the objective reference of value-consciousness is to be described and accounted for under one of the psychological or social sciences this relation would be established. Attempts have been made thus to make Ethics an empirical science, so giving a scientific objectivity to the data of ethics.

Three tendencies may be noted in these attempts.

(1) It has been maintained that the whole meaning of ethical predication is derived from the subjective side of the valuational relation. Desire, interest, some psychological attitude to which the term approval is given, some psychological state such as that of pleasure, may not only be held to be ethical objects, but any one of these may be held to constitute the meaning of value

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and of the ethical predicates. In this case an object is created an ethical object by virtue of an attitude toward it on the part of a subject. Ethics is a specialized enquiry in the field of Psychology.

(2) The relativism and possibilities of chaos inherent in such a view are obvious. These are to some extent overcome by a theory which attempts to give the subjective intension of ethical predication a kind of objective status by defining ethical terms not by reference to individual attitudes but to the wider psychological attitude of a social community. By such a social attitude individual, non-social tendencies are criticized, corrected and finally eliminated in favour of those which represent a more general assent. Some such general attitude is then held to be what is meant in ethical predication. Ethics becomes a branch of social psychology or sociology. And if it be further maintained that this general social agreement has found expression in the customs, laws and institutions of social groups, these may be brought within the scope of investigation and the data of ethics may be regarded as essentially anthropological or sociological.

(3) This latter result may, however, be reached from another direction.

Under some form of optimism—theological, metaphysical or unacknowledged—it may be held that evolution and progress are practically synonymous terms, and that, therefore, in the customs and laws which have evolved in the course of social history we have the data of ethics. Ethics

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is thus introduced to the investigation of laws, customs and human institutions under the theory that these represent the developed wisdom of the race, codified and expressed in law and social usage. It is true that progress tends to crystallize and to become static in the process of codification, and this lends itself to the error of conservatism, that of defining morality as conformity to the code. But, taken in the large, Ethics may, under such a view, be regarded as an empirical science, the data of which are sociological and anthropological.

It is at this point, it would seem, that Philosophical Ethics and Positive Ethics must part company, the latter to investigate the data which its presuppositions lead it to consider the data of ethics; the former to investigate the presuppositions themselves. For it must be noted that the empiricist's investigation is carried on under guidance of a concept which he must either assume to be applicable to the process of evolution which he is investigating or find realized in it, if the data of the process are to be interpreted as data of ethics. In either case he is applying a criterion; and in neither case can the nature of the process be its own criterion.

It has been characteristic of naturalistic ethics to select some aspect of the natural order and raise it to the position of a criterion for the moral order. This has given Ethics an empirical objectivity in keeping with the tendency to lay emphasis upon the positive sciences and has met with an appear-

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ance of success sufficient to cover the fallacy which nevertheless is involved. The appearance of success has been due to the fact that a principle of selection has been introduced by which a natural object which is also ethically characterized, has been chosen as a criterion, with sufficient plausibility to lead to its adoption as the basis of an ethical theory, and of moral practice. The plausibility of a naturalistic criterion so established has lent support to the fallacious assumption that a naturalistic definition of ethical concepts has been attained. The entire naturalness and seeming objectiveness of this procedure has obscured the fact that back of it stood a concept which had not been defined, which was used as a selective principle in determining the criterion which then in turn was used to define the concept itself.

Though subject to this fallacy the three types of theory briefly reviewed reveal a common desire to bring Ethics into conformity with positive sciences by exhibiting its facts as in some way objective and scientifically verifiable.

In proceeding to a statement of what is implied by objectivity in Ethics, we may note at this point tendencies which have led naturalistic moralists, in the interests of a scientific objective investigation of ethical data, to theories of the essential relativity of ethical judgments, and also tendencies which have led more popular ethical opinion to a degree of subjectivity which is often unreconciled with an equally stout defence of objectivity. This latter

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inconsistency appears, for example, when it is held to be right that an individual should do what from his own point of view he believes to be right, and at the same time that what he does can never be judged by the individual to have its rightness relative to his point of view.

The "objective" point of view of science is sometimes set over against—every other point of view. The assumption would seem to be that not only has science a peculiarly unyielding set of facts with which to deal, but also a peculiarly unyielding way of dealing with them. In contrast with this way may be set that of a parent in passing judgment upon his own children, or of an artist upon his work. The extreme case has been recorded by Shakespeare in Jessica's "But love is blind."

The explanation of the subjectivity involved in such cases lies in the difficulties of the individual in overcoming the influences which are of a personal character and not shared by his neighbours—who have children of their own. On the other hand the judgments of scientists are held to be transferable. Scientific objectivity is obtained through detachment from the emotional states and traditional influences under which attitudes toward things are substituted for judgments upon them. Scientific objectivity is approached whenever a judgment is formed with freedom from all psychological conditions peculiar to the one forming the judgment. As these subjective influences are eliminated whatever, if anything, is left will

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be universally possible for experience, and universality sponsors rationality.

There are dangers to be avoided in maintaining the limitations imposed by this objective point of view. While the psychological conditions under which a judgment is formed may distort experience and bias the judgment, still the conditions of experience and of judgment are psychological. Hence, the detachment gained by scientific objectivity as an attitude may in some cases only serve to limit experience and exclude relevant observation. On the other hand there are obvious advantages in a critically adopted "objective" attitude toward facts, and there will be an increasing probability that judgments formed under these conditions will be true, as compared with those formed under emotional influences, provided that no emotional factor is either part of the total object which is judged or necessarily enters into the perceptual relation itself.

It will be remembered that Mill used a test not unlike this approach to universality when he maintained that "Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure."<sup>1</sup> When the influences of individual tendencies are checked against each other, and when even the intense influence of those moral sanctions with which early training has surrounded certain preferences has been ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Utilitarianism*, 6th edn., London, 1877, p. 12.

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cluded, then it may be assumed that a high degree of agreement in accepting a proposition as true is evidence of its truth.

Another consideration regarding objectivity arises out of that already mentioned. However sceptical may be one's conclusions as to the probability that any given ethical judgment is true—and all sciences have their scepticisms—one may nevertheless maintain a theory of the strict objectivity of that judgment. In fact one's very scepticism regarding any particular judgment implies the acceptance of a standard of objective validity. For, if what is meant by an ethical proposition is an assertion of personal feeling toward some object or event there need be comparatively little doubt as to what that attitude is; at least psychological analysis would be the means of dealing with doubts of this kind. Scepticism regarding man's ability to form true ethical judgments is not scepticism regarding his ability to have attitudes toward objects or his ability to recognize the psychological nature of those attitudes. It rests upon the assumption that, lying outside these, there is some objective fact in which the ethical character which is to be known inheres. In pointing to man's incapacity fully to know, it assumes that what is to be known exists in some sense independent in its character of man's attitude toward it.

The tendency to psychological subjectivity of the kind opposed to the objectivity here considered will be even more natural in ethical judgments

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than in those in the fields of other sciences. Whereas, in regard to physical fact it requires some sophistication to make subjectivity seem plausible, as in the case of colour, ethical judgments not infrequently fall under subjectivity through a kind of natural sophistication which arises without the stimulus of critical analysis required in the case of the perception of natural objects. Two causes of this may be suggested. There is the contrast always to be drawn between the character of the agent and the character of his acts with regard to their consequences. This leaves the way open to an ambiguity which appears, for example, in the very general contention that it is right for one to do what he thinks to be right even though it turns out to be wrong. To this is added the desire for self-justification which appears in the moral situation peculiarly. Under this influence, and the influence of actual uncertainty as to the rightness and wrongness of actions, it is not unnatural to have recourse to the subjective realm of motive in assessing the moral character of conduct. This places it in a realm beyond controversy, where even self-deception offers consolation when the objective facts of the case go against one.

Reference to the subjective conditions of experience tends to support this subjectivity. Some cognitive relation to the real is the presupposition of every science. The existence of the subject is ordinarily taken for granted with little analysis of the part which it plays in the determination



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of the object as it is given in experience. But in ethical experience the more personal factors become so much more evident and the psychological influences play so much more prominent a part as to demand recognition and analysis if an attempt is to be made to develop a science of that experience. The prevalence of differences of opinion in the case of ethical judgments; the peculiarly intangible nature of their subject-matter; the impossibility of verifying one opinion as against another by physically manifesting the properties under discussion; the special personal interest in moral situations, referred to in the preceding paragraph; the fact that where values are concerned emotional factors not infrequently become especially intense; these considerations and the great complexity of the psychological situation from which valuation arises, tend quite disproportionately to increase the emphasis upon the subjective side of the cognitive relation in ethical experience. There appears, therefore, to be special plausibility in maintaining of ethical judgments that they include reference to subjective influences, and hence, of ethical facts, that their existence and nature depend in far greater degree upon psychological conditions, than is the case with natural objects.

This passage from the subjective conditioning of ethical judgments to the subjective nature of ethical fact, however natural, is none the less fallacious. That it occurs may be attributed to a kind of "conditioning" of ethical predication, in

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which a concomitant factor in ethical experience comes, through its psychological dominance, to be regarded as the factor in the experience from which its ethical significance is derived. It is evident that in every case of judgment some psychological conditions are present, and these we have seen become the more marked in the case of ethical judgments. Because in every ethical experience some psychological fact, such as interest, desire, pleasure, is prominent, there is a "conditioning" tendency to substitute the concomitant psychological experience for the meaning of the ethical fact by which it is originally aroused.

The tendency to subjectivism in ethical theory thus rests upon a general natural fallacy; that of making the psychological conditions of an object's being experienced at all part of the definition of the object as it is given in experience.

However the cognitive relation may be conceived within a final metaphysical whole, it is a relation which marks the utmost form of relationality for thought, as it embraces both subject-consciousness and object-consciousness in one experience. The cognitive relation is thus both elemental and ultimate for any order of beings to whom experience can have objective reference. Whether metaphysical theory leads us beyond this relation or not must, therefore, be a futile question so far as the development of any science is concerned. The presupposition of science must be the polarity of subject and object. Hence the subject factor is a final con-

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dition of science as resting upon experience; but its importance does not lie in the determination of the *meaning* of the known object but rather in the possibility of its being a known object at all.

So much rests upon this contrast between the conditions of experience and the content of experience as meaning, that a brief reference to the example of colour may be useful. If certain conditions exist, of which organic and psychological conditions are part, there will be the perception of colour. These are the existing conditions of the experience which has a specific meaning, let us say, yellow. If it were true that at one time the organic conditions necessary for the perception yellow had never existed then, when organic changes took place through which the perception of yellow finally became possible, it became possible that yellow should be known. Clearly experience of yellow was not experience of the conditions under which it became possible, but of a new meaning. Thus the experience of yellow is conditioned by the existence of organic states, but no part of its meaning *is* these states. The objective reference of the experience itself with its content of meaning, has no reference whatever to the organic conditions which have made the experience possible. The meaning of the experience yellow is not found in the conditions of the experience as they exist in a physical order. Without knowledge of theories of light transmission, of eye, nerve and brain structure, even without final conclusions upon the questions of

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interaction and psycho-physical parallelism, many know quite well what they mean by saying that a given object is yellow.

Now it is theoretically possible that the organic structure of a whole race should so change that the perception of yellow would become impossible; and then again emerge. But both the process of evolutionary change and the physical conditions under which the colour experience arises might differ in the new emergent through structural developments in the eye by which the rods and cones were replaced by equivalent organs by means of which colour experience would again emerge. Were such the case the descriptive analysis of the organic conditions of the perception yellow would differ from that of the conditions under which the experience occurred at an earlier stage, without there being a corresponding difference in the meaning of the experience.

To similar purpose the general doctrine of "emergence" and the principle which underlies that doctrine, serve as a warning that a clear distinction must be maintained between that which conditions the existence of objects, ethical or other, and what defines their natures. If an emergent characteristic may appear out of conditions which are not adequate to explain it in its novelty, these conditions are even more entirely inadequate to define it. But ethical theory seems frequently to have reverted to an attempt to analyse the conditions necessary to the existence of ethical objects, or, more generally, of goods,

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or to have resorted to an analysis of the conditions under which ethical judgments take place, thus making ethics an empirical rather than a logical science. Such analysis may be of great practical importance for moral agency among conditions in which goods are to be actualized; but it cannot result in a definition of value. The analogy of "emergence" suggests that value must elude definition in terms of that from which it emerges.

Subjectivity in Ethics substitutes for the meaning of the ethical character of ethical fact reference to the psychological conditions under which ethical experience takes place. But if the definition of ethical terms, or any other for that matter, were capable of no reference to meaning excepting description of such states as are the conditions of experience, meaning could never have occurred at all. The terms in which the conditions of experience are described would be without meaning equally with the terms for which they offer description. Any reduction of the meaning of an experience to a description of the conditions under which it takes place requires a reduction of the meaning of those conditions when discovered, to a description of the conditions under which they take place, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

Interpretation of experience as having meaning depends upon some irreducible minimum of meaning being given outright, as the intuitive *sine qua non* of the whole structure of meanings which experience comprehends. Thus there is required not only an a priori formal principle but

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an a priori of content to make experience intelligible. Some order of meanings must be accessible to thought or an order of existents would have been unintelligible in the most advanced as in the earliest stages of the evolution of conscious beings. It is the claim that Ethics has to do with certain of these irreducible meanings which marks the trend of recent ethical theory especially represented in the views of Professors Moore, Urban, and Hartmann.

The attempt to establish the objectivity of the data of ethics by making it a natural science appears, then, to have resulted in reducing it to a relativism which becomes subjective in many theories and stands sharply in contrast to theories of ethical objectivity of another kind. We must make a further examination of naturalism in ethical theory, but before considering this specific question we must turn to a discussion of two questions upon which it is especially necessary that clearness of definition should be gained: How is ethical "objectivity" to be interpreted? and, How are terms and propositions relevant to ethical theory to be recognized? To the former of these questions we shall now turn, reserving the latter for the succeeding chapter.

## II

### *Ethical Objectivity*

Objectivity may be interpreted in either of two ways when applied to a discussion of ethical phenomena.

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Dr. W. D. Ross introduces both of these interpretations in concluding that: "good is objective in the sense of being independent of being attended to and of arousing any sort of experience in the mind, but not independent of mind, since it belongs only to minds and to their states and qualities."<sup>1</sup> In the one case intensional objectivity is referred to; in the other, extensional objectivity. In the former case the whole question to be considered is that of the definition of *ethical terms*—what is *meant* when an ethical term is predicated; does its meaning require reference to subjective experience? In the latter case the question is that of the existence and nature of *ethical objects*. Dr. Ross contends that there are always minds or their states or qualities in the cases where "good" should be attributed.

It will be evident that objectivity in one of the senses in which it is used does not imply objectivity in the other. An ethical term is not made objective in intension by being predicable of other objects than personal subjects or their states, nor intensionally subjective by being relevantly predicable only of such subjects or their states even though that relevance be determined by its intension. It becomes intensionally subjective solely by having reference to a subjective state included in its meaning. It may be quite true of certain ethical terms that their predication is restricted by their very meaning to subjects, while at the same time they are thoroughly objective in the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *International Journal of Ethics*, vol. xxxvii, p. 118.

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sense that their meaning bears no necessary reference to the judging subject. Again, a judgment upon a psychological state would not be made subjective by reason of its being a judgment upon a state of a subject. Hence while psychological states are subjective because of their existential status, propositions about them are not made subjective by virtue of the fact that their subject terms are subjective. Unless what is predicated of them is some attitude of the subject passing the judgment, the proposition is as entirely non-subjective in import as though its subject term were a physical object. But such a judgment will become subjective, however objective in appearance, provided that what is predicated of the subjective state which is made the subject of the judgment, is in fact a predicative projection outward upon it of the judging self's psychological attitude toward it. In ostensibly attributing a property to an object, be it physical or psychological, if in the predicate we merely convey, and intend so to convey, information as to our attitude toward the object referred to in the subject term, the import is subjective. Such predicative projection carries under the appearance of attributing a property to an object, what is in fact a statement as to the response of the subject to the object, in terms of the subject's own psychological state. There is projected outward, as upon the object, the subjective state which exists toward it. This is subjectivism *par excellence*.

Of the two senses in which ethical reference



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may be said to be objective, that which has regard to intensional objectivity presents the primary problem for consideration. For, evidently, the objects which are classified as ethical objects will be so classified because of their characterization by some ethical term. Whether ethical terms are intensionally subjective or non-subjective must, therefore, to some degree be decided upon before the objects of which they are predicated can be determined. The extension of the term "ethical object" will be determined by the intension of the ethical terms which may be predicated of them in characterizing objects as ethical objects.

If, for example, ethical terms be defined by reference to some subjective state, such as an emotional attitude, the extension of the term "ethical object" will depend wholly upon the subjective attitude which objects are able to arouse, and ethical enquiry will be a branch of psychological investigation.

If, on the other hand, without explicit definition of ethical terms in such psychological fashion, we proceed inductively to investigate the extension of "ethical object" and find as a result that ethical objects are always those toward which emotional attitudes of a particular kind are felt, one of three conclusions might be drawn:

(a) The emotional attitude might be regarded as the actual defining characteristic upon which the classification of objects into ethical and non-ethical had been based. (b) Or, it might be held that unique import attached to ethical terms by

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which their differentiation from all other terms is determined, and that this unique import has been the basis of the classification of objects into ethical and non-ethical, while the emotional attitude is a concomitant, possibly due to the fact that objects when recognized as ethical objects elicit a unique emotional response. (c) Or, it might be held that ethical terms have unique import which does not intensionally include reference to psychological terms or emotional attitudes towards objects, while at the same time by "conditioned" predication the emotional attitudes of subjects which occur upon the presentation of ethical objects are regarded as the distinguishing marks of ethical objects and are used as the descriptive definitions of ethical terms. It is of interest to conjecture in just which of these ways certain "subjective" theories of ethical predicates interpret the subjective factors which they use as guides in ethical theory; in which of these ways, for example, the terms referred to by Professor Perry in the passages quoted in Chapter I are to be interpreted.

(a) Under the first interpretation ethical terms would be thoroughly subjective and judgments predicating them would, in fact, convey primarily information about the personal subject, and not about the object which is the ostensive subject of the judgment, excepting as it indicated that it was the kind of object which caused a certain reaction on the part of the subject.

(b) Under the second interpretation ethical terms

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would be thoroughly objective intensionally, as would be the import of judgments predicating them.

(c) In the third case ethical terms would be ambiguous. Their import would sometimes lie in the unique ethical character which the one using them intended, insight into that unique character being the basis of predication; at other times this import would be that of non-ethical descriptive definition. Take for example the use of the term admirable, or the term desirable, where the name of a subjective response to an object judged may frequently be used with genuine ethical import. And still there is a lurking ambiguity. In this case language may readily lose its essential ethical meaning and replace this with descriptive terminology, by which classes of objects are distinguished as ethical while the terms by which they are characterized have, strictly speaking, lost all ethical intension. This would be a kind of subverted subjectivity. Whereas under the first interpretation what is held to be actually a predication of subjective attitude is projectively referred outward as if characterizing the object, under the last interpretation what is offered as an objective ethical characterization of objects is so subjectively "conditioned" as to endanger all genuine ethical import. This, it may be suggested, is what happens during those periods of disillusionment when traditional ethical judgments are discarded for what are regarded as more enlightened advances into post-Victorian morals, as fostered by Dr. Watson *et al.*

This confusion is not restricted to popular

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moral opinion. It will be remembered that a fundamental proposition of Mill's Utilitarianism is that "Questions of ultimate ends are not amenable to direct proof. Whatever can be proved to be good, must be so by being shown to be a means to something admitted to be good without proof."<sup>1</sup> But this declaration of the faith of an intuitionist soon becomes involved, by the inductions of an empiricist, with "the theory of life on which this [the Utilitarian] theory of morality is grounded—namely, that pleasure, and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends."<sup>2</sup> And from this point the doctrine of Utilitarianism becomes an openly avowed psychological doctrine of the good, reverting to ethical intuitionism, however, for its most genuinely ethical insights.

From what has been said in the preceding paragraphs it will be apparent that one method of Ethics may be predominantly inductive in its nature. An ethical term, however it be conceived, as subjectively defined, as unique in import, or as ambiguously vacillating between uniqueness and a descriptive definition, may be used in a survey of the facts of experience before a critical examination is made into the import and basis of ethical predication. Such a method will be empirical and will reflect the advantages and the weaknesses of empiricism. It will avoid the narrowness and lack the precision of methods which adopt recognized preconceptions upon which to base ethical interpretations. But a different kind of

<sup>1</sup> *Utilitarianism*, London, 1877, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

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approach to the phenomena of moral experience must eventually be made in which a method predominantly critical will be used to deal with concepts which have ethical import. This method must begin with an investigation of the terms by which ethical predication is made, and by which, through such predication, the class "ethical object" is determined. All other methods, whatever they may be as methods of Psychology, Sociology or Metaphysics, are prescientific as methods of Ethics, for they have approached the problems of Ethics with presuppositions prior to the examination of ethical terms themselves, and thus have imposed upon ethical theory tendencies which are liable to distort the data of ethics.

Once the import of different ethical terms has been grasped and freed from fallacious or ambiguous intension, logical conditions inherent in the terms themselves will serve to determine the objects which may be classified as ethical objects, for it will then become evident that the application of certain ethical terms is restricted to certain classes of objects by the intension of the terms. The result will be the a priori elimination of certain objects because of the logical irrelevance of ethical predication to them.

This procedure in fact underlies many popular generalizations of an ethical character, as in the general agreement that moral goodness may relevantly be predicated only of persons. But such generalizations require investigation not only *for a discovery of* the application of ethical terms,

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but also *by means of* ethical terms which have been critically considered. As in the case of other subject-matter, a certain degree of intensional import underlies ethical discourse at a quite pre-scientific level and determines the recognition of what is relevant to it. Such discourse will often give evidence of shrewd ethical insight. But where this is the case it must be because ethical content of discoverable logical character underlies this discourse and insight, and is open to investigation in its logical character. This investigation, by exhibiting logical relations between certain terms, ethical and non-ethical, may attain two results. The extension of the term "ethical object" may be determined; and the extension of the class "ethical object" may be exhibited as *probably* determined by non-ethical as well as ethical predicates. For example, it may be inferred from an analysis of moral responsibility in its relation to praise- and blame-worthiness, that these can be attributed only to beings possessing rationality and freedom of the will. Thus ethical objects, so far as praise- and blame-worthiness is concerned, would be limited, by the intension of the terms, to objects of which certain non-ethical terms are predicable. To the degree that this indicates a strict concomitance there would be ground for the inference that probably every object possessing certain non-ethical properties is an ethical object.

The dangers of such procedure are obvious, but they are reduced when it is kept in mind that the non-ethical is merely a derived determination

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incapable of giving any indication whatever of the import of ethical terms. Fallacy would be avoided only as the primacy of the ethical import is maintained, and fallacy would occur whenever an attempt was made to derive the ethical import of a term from its non-ethical concomitant. This, it may be suspected, is the weakness of naturalistic ethics where natural concomitants of ethical characteristics have been taken as defining those ethical characteristics, because there has been failure to recognize the fact that they would never have been known to be concomitants of ethical characteristics if ethical terms had not an import apart from their naturalistic definition.

It must not be assumed, from what has here been said, that some abstruse a prioristic system of notions is to be held in the air overshadowing the plain man's practical moral insight. It is not impossible that a survey of the best practical wisdom of mankind would result in the empirical verification of the result of a logical investigation of the ethical concepts and their application. It ought to do so, for the logical investigation would itself be of those very concepts by which the best practical wisdom of mankind would be given its content. It will, of course, be recognized that a selective process is at the back of the study of this crystallization of wisdom which is regarded as the best, and that no merely popular agreement will suffice to guarantee the validity of ethical judgment. Thus while it may be accepted that ethical import, a priori in its nature, guides

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mankind in the formation of ethical judgments, it is not to be assumed that this guidance is followed with infallible insight by mankind. The empirical method may, therefore, be useful for verification and suggestive with regard to the actual intension of ethical terms; but it must always be a subsidiary, dependent method. It presupposes the use of concepts to which it cannot itself have given meaning.

It thus becomes evident that there is a primary necessity that the problem of intensional objectivity should be considered and a conclusion be arrived at before morality can become ethical, in the sense that it is conscious of its own significance. Unless intensional objectivity can be established with regard to the application of *some* ethical concept to *some* ethical object, extensional objectivity as a theory of ethical objectivity will have no significance. In other words, if the meaning of all ethical predicates be subjective, ethics cannot become objective by predicating them of objects, however unquestionably actual those objects may be.

The problem of extensional objectivity will, however, have to be considered. It seems probable that intensional subjectivity has had so great an influence in ethical theory because the one thing of which we seem to be more certain than any other is that we have characteristic emotional attitudes toward objects, whereas ethical terms have been used with a degree of vagueness and ambiguity which has left it very uncertain whether



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there could be any objectively real facts or objects of which they might be predicated, as having non-subjective import. But the desire for certainty regarding extensional objectivity is one side of a dual motive in Ethics, as the attempt of morality to become conscious of its own implications. The first motive expresses itself in the attempt to maintain objectivity in the meaning of its terms. The second motive is expressed in the attempt to conceive the actual as objectively possessed of ethical character. Only one half of the task of an enquiry into ethical objectivity is completed, therefore, when a conclusion is arrived at with regard to the subjectivity of the import of ethical terms and judgments. These might have reference to a purely ideal world which we can hold before imagination, but never actualize. Or they might refer to the characteristics of a real existent world, or to the possible actualization of ideal value in a realm of fact, existentially real. An enquiry into ethical objectivity must include a study of this problem.

But, setting this question aside while the primary problem of intensional import is being considered we may offer as a minimal interpretation of objectivity in Ethics that it stands for the view that when ethical propositions are entertained in judgments, these judgments bear no necessary reference, for the meaning of their ethical terms, to any state or attitude of any subject or subjects entertaining them.



*SECTION II*

INTENSIONAL IMPORT IN ETHICS



## CHAPTER IV

### *The Uniqueness of Ethical Import*

No small part of ethical theory has been occupied with the discussion of the relation of Ethics to other sciences. It has been variously claimed that it presupposes Metaphysics, and that it is preliminary to Metaphysics; that it is a branch of Psychology, of Sociology, of Logic; and that it is an altogether independent subject. The present chapter will set forth certain conditions of the independence of Ethics lying in the uniqueness of ethical import.

(1) The point of view underlying the contention of this chapter may best be introduced by the statement that the science to which a proposition belongs is revealed, not by the name which appears as its subject term but by the nature of the predication which is made of it. This statement rests upon the fact that the logical significance of a name is determined only as it becomes the term of a proposition. Sciences are built up of propositions in which the names of objects more or less indeterminate within comparatively unreflective experience, become more determinately defined as their objects are made objects of judgment, and the names are thus related in propositions as terms.

When, therefore, a name is used as the subject term of a proposition belonging to some particular science, as also when used in particular context in common conversation, it has already passed

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through an initial stage of some definition and carries with it intensional reference. The act of judgment has its purpose, however, to make attributes explicit which may already be unreflectively associated with the object upon which the judgment is passed or to mark extended knowledge of the object by attributing new qualities learned in either more exact observation or more searching analysis of implications.

A subject term may in this way be comparatively definite so far as its extensional reference is concerned, and intensionally may include reference to many qualities by which its extensional application is popularly determined, but by which its place could not be assigned to any particular science until it is known what predicates are being attributed. An obvious example is that of the name "man" which carries familiar extensional reference and general intensional import. This name may become the subject term of a proposition in Biology, Anthropology or Psychology. The particular science to which the proposition is relevant will depend upon that which is predicated of the subject term. This is clearly true of ethical propositions. It would be generally accepted as true that ethical judgments are passed upon men; but also that when it is stated that a certain man is a biped the judgment is not an ethical judgment.

One question which has already arisen is that of the extension of the subject terms of ethical judgments. (a) From an inductive standpoint, we have seen, a classification may be made of those

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objects upon which ethical judgments are passed, or at least upon which judgments which are intended to be ethical judgments are passed. The difficulty with this method is that we are apt to accept as of ethical significance that which is in fact of no such significance, and thus surround objects with an appearance of ethical meaning which they do not possess. This risk must always be accepted when the beginning point of an enquiry is a broad general survey preliminary to critical elimination of the irrelevant, such as an uncritical survey of what is popularly adopted as the universe of ethical discourse. The advantage of such a method is that it begins near to ordinary human experience and it may be assumed that in the long run the true and relevant will be found within the accepted judgments of mankind. On such grounds a close relation may at first sight seem to exist between Ethics and the psychological and sociological sciences, or History. The relation would in fact, however, be on a par with that of Psychology to Logic.

(b) From a formal standpoint the question regarding the extension of the subject term of ethical propositions may be answered so verbally as to seem a valueless tautology were it not for the fact that the obvious sometimes needs to be stated. It may be said that anything may stand as subject of an ethical judgment of which ethical characterization may be made with relevance. And, nothing about the nature of the subject of a proposition makes that proposition an ethical proposition

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unless ethical characterization is made, affirmatively or negatively.

Popular judgments of an ethical character may be assumed to rest in a general way upon a recognition of compatibility by which, even at a very low reflective level, subjects are given ethical significance which further reflection may confirm as appropriate. But the appropriateness must rest upon inherent relations between subject and predicate terms which are discoverable a priori once the import of ethical predication is recognized. Thus, for example, it may be maintained that when the nature of moral value is understood it is obvious that man is the only object of whom it may be predicated.

The point to be made clear is that the real universe of relevance of a proposition, the science to which it belongs, is determined by what it predicates. Should it appear, therefore, that a proposition is being regarded as an ethical proposition because of some vaguely conceived character of its subject term, while what it predicates is a psychological quality or attitude, one of three conclusions may be drawn: (1) that there is an essential irrelevance in the judgment; (2) that ethical facts are by intension subclasses of psychological facts; or (3) that there is a concealed proposition covered by the intensional reference of the subject term which in effect attributes to it an ethical character, and that, therefore, there are really two propositions implicit in the judgment—one a truly ethical proposition from which the ethical import of



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the proposition is derived, and the other a psychological proposition which has no ethical import whatsoever.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of the first and last alternatives the claim to explicit ethical import is clearly fallacious. If it were shown that the second alternative is false, then it would be shown that the proposition held to be an ethical proposition is in fact no such thing. In this case the further alternatives would be presented: either there are no ethical propositions or an ethical proposition is some other thing. This same method might be applied to the interpretation of ethical facts as subclasses of the facts of any of the other sciences. Then should it appear, after examining the views typical of this general theory of Ethics as a branch of some other science, that in the nature of the case none of them can reveal the real import of ethical terms or propositions, it would be inferred that Ethics is a science of characterizations of quite a different order.

(II) Again: it is necessary to refer to a distinc-

<sup>1</sup> This it may be suspected underlies the so-called fallacy of Mill's transition from psychological to ethical hedonism. It seems almost incredible that Mill should have been guilty of the fallacy of an unrecognized ambiguous use of "desirable." Mill was primarily an intuitionist, it will be remembered. But though "questions of ultimate ends are not amenable to direct proof," he offered persuasive considerations. By an inductive generalization he concluded, however truly, that pleasure is that upon which all agree as the ultimate end. Is it not more reasonable to attribute to Mill an unexpressed assumption that what is so universally and exclusively desired as an end by rational beings must be in fact ethically desirable, than to suppose him guilty of providing elementary classes in Logic with an example of "ambiguous middle"?

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tion of a logical character which has an important bearing in determining the direction in which ethical theory is to proceed. This is true especially in view of the marked influence which psychological considerations have had upon ethical theory.

While *judgment* and *proposition* may appear as practically interchangeable terms in general discussion, a distinction of an essential kind should be drawn between a judgment as a part of the psychological history of an individual, and judgment as the bearer of a proposition. There is a sense in which every judgment is inherently subjective, being one of the events in the history of an individual consciousness. As such it has its psychological antecedents and consequences. An ethical judgment, because of this fact, may be accounted for, at least in part, psychologically. What judgments will in fact be passed will be largely determined by factors of attention, emotional responses, interest, early training, data for comparison, breadth or narrowness of experience, and many other psychological conditions. On the other hand a judgment entertains a proposition. And a proposition stands with a kind of severe austerity and simplicity, aloof from the psychological conditions under which judgment takes place. A proposition is by definition "true or false"; no other consideration is relevant.

The distinction here considered seems to be of first importance for ethical theory. In no other field of enquiry will there be so great a tendency to present causal psychological antecedents of a judgment, or the consequences of a judgment in

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terms of its emotional effect, as evidence for the truth of the proposition which the judgment has the logical significance of entertaining. It may even be claimed that there is an identity between the ethical judgment and the emotional or other psychological conditions with which it is associated. But it will be evident that when ethical theory has set before itself the task of accounting for ethical judgments by reference to the causal associations under which they occur, or of exhibiting the import of ethical propositions in terms of the associations of the judgments which bear the propositions, ethical theory becomes a branch of Psychology, Sociology or Anthropology. It is important to note that the issue whether or not Ethics is a part of such a science does not rest upon the question of the psychological relations of ethical judgments in the order of psychological events, but it is a question of the logical dependence or independence of ethical and psychological propositions.

Thus there may be well established psychological relations between ethical judgments and emotional states; sufficiently well established to make it possible to formulate psychological laws of such relations, as the laws of ethical judgment. This would, however, be no evidence that there is *logical* dependence between ethical propositions and the psychological propositions which describe the conditions under which ethical judgment takes place. From the truth of psychological propositions however impressively they may assert feelings of approval, social agreement, or established attitude

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of an individual or communities there is no possible inference, based upon implication, to the truth of an ethical proposition which has been accepted as true by the individual or community. On other grounds there may be strong reasons for holding that the ethical, or other, propositions which are accepted as true by certain individuals of wisdom, or by communities, are probably true. But the actual truth of the propositions accepted is logically quite independent of both the psychological fact that they have been accepted, and of the further fact that they are probably true because experience has proved the individual's or community's judgment to be generally true. For this reason there must always be a specific distinction maintained between such views as that "to be in accord with custom or community opinion makes an act right," and the view that "it will probably be right if in accord with community opinion, and therefore it is right to act in such accord."

Again, it may be possible to infer, from the fact that a person whose disposition is known felt a certain emotional reaction when confronted with a given objective situation, that he also entertained an ethical proposition of a specific kind with reference to the objective situation. But here again there is no ground for logical inference from the proposition affirming with truth the emotional state, to the truth of the ethical judgment. It may be true that there are characteristic emotional reactions toward objects which psychologically mark them as factual concomitants of ethical judgments, possibly even

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as constituting the psychological conditions under which ethical judgments are passed—as some state of “interest toward” psychologically determines all attention and thus all judgment. But propositions to this effect are independent of ethical propositions, whose truth or falsity is not to be identified with the truth or falsity of psychological propositions unless it may be established that the existence of psychological attitude is exactly what is meant either by ethical predication, or by ethical qualification.

This may seem too obvious to need more than passing reference, but because of the prevalence of the tendency of ethical theory to view ethical predication as essentially psychological in character and because of the claim that ethical propositions may be inferred from psychological propositions because ethical propositions are psychological in their import, it is important to make clear the distinction between that which may be inherent in the nature of those who pass ethical judgments, and that which is inherent in the ethical judgment itself.

Upon this question as to the logical dependence or independence of ethical and psychological propositions a decision must be reached. While its discussion at this point anticipates further consideration of the same problem under a somewhat different form, its relevance to the immediate point at issue invites preliminary reference here. We shall examine an example in which a psychological attitude is taken so to define the import of

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ethical judgment that a proposition asserting the existence of this attitude toward an object or act is held to be equivalent to a proposition ethically characterizing the object or act.

An example of this has been admirably presented in the recent work of Professor Westermarck, *Ethical Relativity*.<sup>1</sup>

But the question to be answered is not what emotions may prompt people to pronounce moral judgments—there are certainly many different emotions that may do that—but whether there are any specific emotions that have led to the formation of the concepts of right and wrong, good and bad, and other moral concepts, and therefore may be appropriately named moral emotions. I maintain that there are two such emotions, both complex by nature, for which I have used the traditional terms moral approval and moral disapproval or indignation.

Now it may be possible to interpret such a statement as meaning that these emotions constitute the background out of which moral concepts have emerged, leaving the emotional import behind them. Under another interpretation the statement would maintain that moral concepts have been derived from these emotions, and include them in the meaning of the concepts themselves. It is this latter view which is called in question.

If, according to this view, we take moral approval to be the emotion which is to be designated “moral emotion” and which is the defining characteristic of “concepts” such as “right and wrong, good and bad, and all other moral con-

<sup>1</sup> *Ethical Relativity*, p. 62.

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cepts," we have a perfectly clear test by which ethical judgments may be known, and the truth of any ethical judgment assessed. Its nature will be the emotion which is excited, if that emotion be a moral emotion.

Let us apply the idea of moral judgment to a specific case. In December, 1933, there took place in the United States the lynching of two men who had confessed that they were guilty of a kidnapping which resulted in the death of their victim. The lynching took place after a series of kidnapping incidents which had aroused public opinion against both kidnapping and the inadequate processes of law which so frequently failed to bring criminals to justice. The Governor of the State in which the lynching took place is reported to have approved the act.

To do a maximum (or minimum) of justice to those participating in lynching under circumstances which won the approval of the act by the Governor, it may be held that the intensity of the indignation shared by the community led those participating in the lynching to feel approval—approval being for Professor Westermarck one of a "wider class of emotions. . . . called retributive emotions." This definition fits the case very neatly. Probably under emotional influences, the Governor justified the act of lynching. Evidently there is here an instance of "moral emotion" *par excellence*. But, on the other hand, all over the United States intense disapproval was felt of the kidnapping, of the lynching, and of the Governor's approval of it. And subsequently

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the President of the United States was reported to have said in a public address, referring to "that vile form of collective murder—lynch law—which has broken out in our midst anew," that "We do not excuse those in high places or low who condone lynch law."

Here, apparently, we have a contradiction of the incontrovertible if the import of ethical judgment is a moral emotion belonging to a wider class of "retributive emotions." All the conditions were evidently present to make an act of lynching "approved"; and also disapproved.

It is submitted that the moral emotion of approval which is one of a wider class of retributive emotions, is not adequate to deal with this situation in the name of judgment. Some intensional objectivity is necessary if ethical judgment is to have that unique character which makes it possible for one ethical judgment to contradict another. If emotional states constitute the import of ethical judgments there is no ground upon which ethical judgments may be logically contradictory.

It should be noted that the emotion of approval here considered is not a mode of discernment;<sup>1</sup> it is a definition of meaning. And it is meaning in terms of the psychological level. The doctrine considered is definitely opposed to theories of emotional apprehension of value, and to such a view as that of Dr. W. D. Ross, who, in analysing the feeling of approval, claims that he "can find

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Urban's and Hartmann's doctrines discussed in Chapter v, p. 184 ff.



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nothing in it but the thought that the thing approved is good, + a feeling of pleasure in contemplating it.”<sup>1</sup>

The situation here analysed is evidence of the invalidity of any attempt to pass by logical inference from psychological fact to ethical fact. There is an ultimate distinction between them in view of which the logical independence of psychological propositions and ethical propositions is assured, no matter what psychological laws may be revealed as to the relation of emotional feeling to the passing of ethical judgment or the relation of the passing of psychological judgment to the passing of ethical judgment. For the distinction just noted in no way contradicts the view that ethical judgments are formed under the influence of emotional factors in experience. Nor does it necessarily stand opposed to the view that value perception is through emotional experience. It would also be compatible with the view that ethical judgment is passed upon the emotional effect which an object has upon the subject. All that is being insisted upon at this point is that when a genuinely ethical judgment is passed, be it under emotional influence, after “feeling” apprehension of the nature of an object or event, or be it judgment upon an emotional response of a subject, the judgment has logically an ethical character to be clearly distinguished from the psychological character which it possesses, and it is an ethical judgment solely because the proposition which it entertains predicates ethical

<sup>1</sup> *The International Journal of Ethics*, vol. xxxvii, p. 116.

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character. When, therefore, ethical judgments are spoken of as true or false it is not necessary to deny them their psychological status; but it is altogether necessary to recognize that it is not their place in the psychological series of events but their unique relation to propositions which confers their logical status.

Among psychological facts the judgment stands alone in this regard. No emotion, for example, is true or false. An emotion exists or does not exist. Its existence may be universally associated with the experience of certain kinds of objects and with the entertaining of certain kinds of propositions regarding them—ethical propositions, for example. This close concomitance may ultimately establish “conditioned” assertion in which, while the proposition actually asserted has reference to the state of the subject, it is interpreted as making affirmation or denial of ethical character to an object. No doubt such propositions are general currency as ethical propositions. But they are counterfeits, or at least coin of another realm. It serves no serious purpose to insist upon fine distinctions in the interests of mere pedantry; but when distinctions which are genuine are overlooked and lead to inaccuracies of statement and these become confirmed by usage, there is danger of these inaccuracies losing their harmlessness and infecting meaning itself.

The failure to maintain the distinction between ethical judgments and non-ethical judgments, and the tendency of one of these surreptitiously to

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usurp the place of the other provides a fruitful source of fallacy in Ethics. This tendency will be all the stronger since an expression of feeling may cover the entire absence of a genuine ethical opinion, and the disinclination to form one.

It may be the case that transcendence of subjective psychological influences is impossible. Certainly experience as we know it rests in psychological fact, and so far as we know them judgments are the only conditions under which we can entertain propositions, and judgments are psychological facts. The objects to which we give attention, making them subjects of judgments, hold our attention through their psychological influence upon us. While a proposition may be timeless, the entertainment of a proposition in judgment takes time. The timeless unity of an argument is its logical character; but the process of judgment may be broken before any conclusion is reached if certain psychological conditions arise. The conditions of the presentation of an object, the maintenance of interest and attention during the process of reasoning are psychological matters. But when all this is taken into account, and however sceptical we may be as to our own reliability as the condition of experience, we are concerned with judgments because they refer to something different from these subjective conditions under which they exist. They entertain propositions, and these have the unique character of truth or falsity in their objective reference. This constitutes the

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logical significance of the judgments which are their vehicles.

Given the psychological condition of judgment with its logical content the question must arise: to what extent is the content itself determined by the subjective influences of the one judging? We have seen that the kind of proposition which the one judging is likely to entertain is influenced not only by the demand for validity under which thinking takes place but also by his personal interests and the physical conditions under which presentations of objects come into his experience. But in maintaining a proposition the thinker does not, apart from sophistication of his thought, regard the proposition as having its primary significance in the psychological or organic conditions which may be inferred from the fact that he entertains it. Hence we must distinguish between what is to be inferred from a proposition in itself, and what is to be inferred from the fact that a given thinker is entertaining a particular proposition. This requires a complete intensional distinction between ethical propositions which are implied in ethical propositions, and non-ethical propositions which may be inferred from the fact that an ethical proposition of a particular kind is being entertained by some individual under given conditions.

An example of the application of this fundamental distinction will make clear the importance which it has for ethical theory.

A value judgment may be passed by a person A upon some object X in the terms "X is good."

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The proposition "X is good" having its specific ethical content is maintained by A in a judgment which is part of his psychological history, and has its causal antecedents. One who knows A and that A has judged X to be good may infer that X is an object of thought and probably of interest to A, that a state of approval exists in A's mind toward X, and possibly that A will try to actualize X. It may be again inferred that A thinks X to be good; possibly that A's social community agrees that X is good; possibly that A is mistaken in the real nature of X, otherwise he would not have judged it to be good; possibly that having judged X to be good A will judge Y to be bad. Many other inferences may be drawn dependent upon what is known about A the judger. But it is evident that none of these is relevant to the import of the proposition which A himself is entertaining, namely, "X is good." Propositions inferred with this proposition as a premise rest upon knowledge about X, not about A.

One general cause of confusion in Ethics would appear, therefore, to lie in the failure to distinguish between using psychological facts as a definition of ethical import, and using them merely as a statement of the circumstances, or even the standardized conditions of verification, under which those ethical terms are predicated. In other words an explanation of the judgment as a psychological fact is taken to reveal the import of the proposition which constitutes the logical content of the judgment.

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Were we able to deny meaning to judgments and be content with explaining them, the whole course of thought would have quite another history, or entire lack of history; at least it then would never have been recorded history. The recording as well as that which is recorded bears witness to a ruling motive resting upon value conceived as in some sense an explanation lying outside the order of explanations, a more ultimate principle under which all explanation must lie.

(III) An analysis of the nature of judgment yields a further distinction. Judgments may be related as inferences according to the implications of the propositions which they entertain. But, judgments have also objective reference beyond themselves to realities which exist independently of the judgments themselves, in a sense in which judgments cannot be independent of propositions; for apart from being bearers of propositions judgments have no logical character at all. Now, propositions may be considered from either of two complementary points of view. They form systems, or possibly a system, of members related to one another by implication, and in this capacity they underlie the process of inference, which is a psychological process. They also have truth or falsity by virtue of their objective reference which, while in one sense always capable of interpretation by reference to other propositions, is not primarily such a reference, but ordinarily at least *means* to be something quite different, namely, a reference to an existent order. This truth-falsity defining

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characteristic of propositions in having objective reference, underlies the significance of judgments as affirming or denying. However relevant to the discovery of true propositions regarding a complex order of existents a consideration of implications may be, the primary import of a proposition entertained in a judgment is its objective reference. The cognitive relation rests upon the presupposition of this reference. A judgment has, as it were, an exposure in two directions. It mediates between an order of propositions which are related by implication, and an order of existents related by natural law. That this mediation is in some finally significant sense "valid" is a necessary assumption for thought.

If the analysis made thus far has been accepted as roughly indicating what is involved in judgment, we may take a further step with reference to the terms of propositions. A term standing originally as a member of a proposition entertained in a given judgment, may be abstracted from that judgment and considered by itself, thus becoming the subject matter of quite another judgment from that in which its original import lay. It may thus be possible to take a proposition such as "X is good" and by abstraction make "good" the subject of consideration and the subject of propositions which will then be true or false with regard to "good," quite independently of the truth or falsity of the proposition from which it has been abstracted for attempted analysis.

Terms themselves have objective reference by

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which the content of the propositions into which they enter as members is constituted. And in the course of any special enquiry every term becomes subjected to an attempt to reduce it by definition to simpler terms. On the other hand, if thought is to have any meaning it must bear that meaning finally by virtue of its reference to that which is irreducible. Now when judgment is considered purely from the side of its existential objective reference this final irreducibility is never possible, for explanation always demands a further step. Still, experience is actually full of meaning and passes from meaning to meaning while at the same time acknowledging the character of its content as bearing objective reference to an order of existents which analysis cannot exhaust. Here we find revealed the nature of the rational subject and his mediation between an order of existents subject always to regressive analysis and explanation, and an order of meanings by which experience rests finally upon the irreducible, even though the majority of meanings may be capable of analysis. The irreducible immediate reference by which thought knows the object is the meaning which the object has for thought; the object's essential character in being intelligible. Now it is just this combination of objective reference and meaning which gives unique character to ethical propositions. For, as we shall endeavour to show in the following chapter, ethical meaning cannot be defined in terms of other known orders of reference while at the same time, as much of the argument of



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Section III is to be directed to showing, ethical experience has specific reference to the order of existential reality by appeal to which verification is most frequently attempted in every science.

Thus when we consider a value judgment we are confronted by a phenomenon of two-fold significance. (*a*) Its content is to a large extent determined by psychological and sociological influences. This is true both of the subject term and the predicate term of the proposition entertained in the judgment. Obviously the circumstances under which a person lives will determine what objects are presented to him for experience and for judgment. His ethical opinions will also be influenced very largely by the moral training under which he has been brought up, and this will influence what predication will be made with regard to the objects experienced. Social communities transmit their tendencies to view with favourable or adverse opinion great classes of objects and acts. (*b*) But the objective reference of ethical judgment lies quite beyond these influences. Unless they become themselves the objects upon which judgment is passed they form no part of that to which the judgment is intended to refer. However exactly one might predict of another what his judgment will be under certain psychological conditions, inferring this from psychological antecedents of the judgment, this does not constitute the import of the judgment itself. Even to the one forming it there may be a retrospective tracing of the lines of influence under

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which he was led to form a given judgment which he later realized to be untrue. These influences, therefore, could not have been its import. Again, he may later regard as his *judgment* what at the time was in fact merely a psychological reaction to an objective situation. But, however it may have initiated, when from a psychological process there emerges a judgment proper there has occurred that which in its inherent nature, as also in the intention of the one whose judgment it is, is capable of an entirely new interpretation. The judgment is related not only to psychological antecedents but to a proposition which constitutes its import and which is uniquely characterized by being either true or false. When a psychological process culminates short of content capable of this formulation it can only by courtesy be referred to as a judgment. It may be an object of scientific investigation as a member of the psychological order, but it is incapable of entering into a science with propositional force, for it is neither true nor false.

Further, should such a psychological process or attitude become itself an object of judgment any proposition regarding it, of which its name is a term, must contain another term of quite a different order before the judgment upon it as a psychological fact can be an ethical judgment. Non-ethical propositions about 'psychological facts' may have great ethical value as stating purely causal truths of importance for moral conduct. But with primary ethical characterization they would have nothing to do. When, for example, a certain kind of mental

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attitude such as desire is judged to be a means toward the gaining of a certain end which is good, a purely causal proposition is entertained in the judgment. But when the mental state is asserted to be of ethical character, good, bad, right, wrong, the judgment draws for its predication upon an entirely non-psychological order.

The distinction must, therefore, be maintained between the import of any body of statements in which propositions are set forth regarding the processes culminating in valuation as a psychological phenomenon and, on the other hand, statements setting forth propositions in which value-judgments are expressed. Propositions of the first class are psychological propositions and on this level are true (or false) without regard to the truth (or falsity) of the propositions in which value is asserted. Thus the proposition that a given valuation was made under specific psychological influences of an individual or social kind might be true while the valuation itself was entirely false. This becomes obvious when we consider two different persons reacting toward the same conduct with gratification on the part of one and with great aversion on the part of the other. We may explain with perfect accuracy why an act of lying was approved by one person and disapproved by another. We may accurately describe the psychological processes which led to two such different judgments as "conduct X was good," and "conduct X was bad." Two sets of propositions descriptive of the psychological series culminating

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in contradictory judgments may be equally true. But the judgments cannot be.

(iv) There remains to be noted another distinction which is to be drawn among the many propositions which occur in the course of an exposition of ethical theory. Primary ethical propositions predicating ethical terms will, obviously, enter into such a discussion. It will be upon these that all will depend for their significance. If there were none such there would be no body of ethical judgments bearing evidence of a body of ethical fact to be investigated. Every science has its propositions which profess to bear true reference to the facts with which that particular science is concerned. So also in the case of Ethics. But in addition to these essentially ethical propositions which predicate ethical characteristics, a theory or discussion of ethics will contain many propositions about ethical propositions, and also certain verbal propositions. Into this latter class will fall those many attempts to define ethical concepts which have marked the development of ethical theory.

In ethical propositions of the characterizing kind, in which genuine ethical predication is made, it will be evident that we have propositions which form the foundation of ethical science. Propositions of the second class, which we may call *definitive* propositions to distinguish them from those primarily characterizing, will be distinguished by having as their subject terms ethical propositions or ethical terms, but predicating something

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which is not necessarily ethical. Hence these propositions, however important in the exposition of ethical theory, are not necessarily ethical propositions, but may be propositions about ethical propositions or ethical terms. The distinctions here noted may be exemplified by the following propositions:

"Act A is right"; "Pleasure is good"; these would be ethical propositions of the characterizing kind. Whether they be primary or secondary ethical propositions need not be considered here. Of Act A and of Pleasure ethical character is being predicated, truly or falsely.

The propositions "Right means conducive to the highest good" and "Good means pleasurable" would be definitive propositions about ethical terms; verbal propositions, if recognized as propositions at all.

" 'Act A is right' predicates a secondary ethical term," and " 'Pleasure is good' may mean any one of several things," would be propositions about ethical propositions.

Still another order of propositions will enter into ethical theory, genuinely synthetic propositions such as: "All right acts bring pleasure" and "Morality has emerged in the process of evolution." These clearly are not primarily ethical propositions.

Many propositions which enter into ethical theory will have this derivative ethical significance; for Ethics is still seeking a theoretical structural frame adequate to the mass of material with which

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moral experience presents it; as philosophical theory in general seeks a frame adequate to the whole range of experience. Confusion of primary ethical propositions with these propositions which enter into ethical theory is not liable to occur. A distinction of some importance may be noted here, however; the distinction between two different forms which Ethics as a science may take. Ethics may be largely confined to enquiry into the logical bases of ethical thought and discourse and the logical relations between ethical terms. Much modern enquiry in Ethics is of this nature. Greatly daring, let us assume that Ethics as such a science of logical form has been completed. Ethics as an empirical science might then without confusions in meanings investigate the facts of the ethical order. But it is with the former kind of enquiry that we are now engaged.

An attempt has been made in this chapter to show that ethical predication has unique character and that a distinction must be maintained between ethical propositions, that is, propositions in which ethical predication is made, and both propositions regarding the psychological conditions under which ethical judgments are formed and those other propositions which are relevant to ethical theory but are not essentially ethical in import.

In the following chapter the uniqueness of ethical predication will be considered further as this is revealed in an enquiry into the meaning of ethical terms.

## CHAPTER V

### *The Meaning of Ethical Terms*

IN Ethics, as in every other field of enquiry, there are certain presuppositions which underlie at least vocabulary and often final theory. In the physical sciences, as in Ethics, reference is constantly made to objects as possessing properties; there is general acceptance of the distinction between that which is personal and what is impersonal, objective and subjective; a degree of common-sense realism is uncritically adopted as though no real problem as to the nature of knowing were involved. Even where there are evidently important and differing psychological factors determining the nature of experience, language accommodates itself to an uncritical distinction between the subject who investigates and the object which is under investigation. But in Ethics, while the language framework remains the same, as though that which is referred to as objective were meant to be objective in the same sense as physical properties and relations are objective, there are complications, as we have seen. In addition to the tendency to intensional subjectivity which we have already noted, there are frequently distinctly different meanings used in connection with the same name for which no distinction in terminology is provided. This becomes a fruitful source of ambiguity in Ethics with scarcely a parallel in other fields.

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As an example there may be taken the use of the words "subjective" and "objective" themselves. Let us take two cases in which, on the one hand, a certain object is said to be yellow, and on the other, an act is said to be right. Wide possibilities of ambiguity are presented. An original naïve interpretation of these judgments as upon exactly the same level in objective import would readily give place to the opposite view that while one was objective the other was subjective; or that while the colour is objective rightness is subjective; or, possibly the exactly opposite view that whereas colour is subjectively determined, rightness is objectively independent of the subject. One may be led beyond the position of common-sense realism to recognize that psychological factors so largely determine colour experience that it must be regarded as subjective, whereas from the view that rightness is determined largely by subjective conditions, one may be led to hold that rightness is thoroughly objective; and in the whole process of change of opinion the terms subjective and objective will not have been used to mean the same thing in any two cases because of a shifting of the line of demarcation between subject and object.

Without emphasizing the epistemological problem unduly we must indicate certain distinctions which should be kept before us when the terms subjective and objective are used. This will indicate how they will be interpreted in the course of the present discussion and what is involved in the definition of ethical objectivity offered in the



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preceding section. It will also indicate what is involved in an ethical objectivity which is both an objectivity and ethical.

Confusion arises from the fact that there are four general spheres of reference to which terms may have application and which may variously be referred to under the subjective-objective polarity. Distinctions between these spheres of reference may be presented as a kind of hierarchy of polarities each of which may be studied with regard to the particular point of view upon which division is based. Underlying this procedure we must recognize, and then carry as a parenthesis, the fundamental distinction between living experience as the progressive actuality of conscious being and the content of this experience in terms of its objective reference. This basic distinction will be referred to later. For the present our attention is confined to those familiar polarities which are yielded within experience by an analysis of the objective reference of that experience.

(1) The first division by which an objective order is set in contrast with elements of subjective reference may be made on any one of several principles. At least a serviceable division is that which adopts as a criterion of an objective order inclusion as part of the subject-matter of one of the physical sciences; an order of objective things and events which are physical. Here, at any rate, is a realm of fact which may be accepted as wholly non-subjective, apart from epistemological considerations which are entirely remote from the

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ideas upon which usual terminology is based. Were ethical ideas defined in terms of this order they would be objective in at least one sense.

But even within this order one's own body takes on peculiarly personal significance as the direct mediator of stimuli which arise from objects outside the body which through its stimulation become objects of personal experience. The final emergent experience on the subject side of a *cognitive* polarity rests upon a kind of *contiguity* polarity on the physical level. On one side of this latter polarity everything external to the physical organism of a sensing being stands over against the organism which is capable of communicating the stimuli which are the causes of psychical events. The organism as a condition of a great variety of conscious experiences stands in a position of peculiar intimacy to the subject, while still remaining on the objective side of a cognitive relation in which it may itself become an objective physical stimulus. In spite of this intimate relation to the subject the organism remains "objective" in a quite unambiguous sense.

(11) Contrasted with the physical order stands the order of psychological fact. To just what extent this order is to be considered unambiguously non-spatial and subjective will depend largely upon the general theory of psychology under which it is interpreted. It is an order subject to certain quantitative measurements which make it the subject-matter of an objective science. It stands over against subjects by whom its phenomena are

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analysed quantitatively. It yields to experience the most direct data of the objective order, mediating external stimuli which emerge in experience as knowledge of an order given as external to the organism of the sensing subject itself; or as external to those parts of the organism by which other parts are sensed. But in spite of this degree of objectivity, psychological fact is so intimately the content of what constitutes a personal subject that there is no confusion in placing all such psychological facts as are not given in the organic body itself, upon the subjective side of that polarity of the subjective and the objective. It must be noted, however, that this is not strictly a cognitive polarity. The facts of the subjective order in the psychological sense are strictly in time as truly as are the facts of the physical sciences. Their very existence as objects of an empirical science depends upon their relations within the time series of events. Whatever may be said as to the psychological nature of the specially physical conditions upon which the subject's experiences rest, these conditions at least stand in definite temporal relation to physical events and psychological events. So far as the cognitive relation is concerned they may be placed upon the objective side by being made objects of investigation which are below the cognitive level itself.

It is not, however, during their examination as objective data of psychology that the true significance of the contents of conscious experience is revealed. They then, in fact, have lost their primary character as experience in having become objects

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of enquiry. We are not dependent upon an objective analysis of experience for our realization of its inherent significance. In the very fact of experience itself we have passed into that inner side of reality where existents are subjective existents, in some immediate sense the elements of selves. Thus in spite of the objective character which may be ascribed to the data of psychology, there is no ambiguity in referring to them as subjective, and to any terms defined by reference to these data as subjective. This will be less obvious, as we shall see, when a more social aspect of psychological data is considered, but the general result in ethical theory does not radically differ in the two cases. Ethical terms will be subjective in import if defined in psychological terms.

(III) In this psychological order a new characteristic appears by which certain psychological facts are constituted members of still another order. For certain psychological phenomena, namely, ideas, while sharing temporal existence with physical objects and conditioned by an organism in the space-time order of objects, stand in a relation to each other which exhibits a significance not found in physical or certain other psychological phenomena. In so far as our ideas are psychological facts they too have a place in time and may be described as parts of an order with antecedents and consequences. But beyond the relation of succession is that which gives them their distinctive importance, namely the relation by which they take their place in predication and in inference. The laws of this

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relation are not those of temporal succession, but are logical, peculiar to the relations of ideas and of judgments as logical. The characterization of man as rational rests at least in part upon this inner non-spatial, non-temporal continuity and capacity for coherence in his experience as an ideational order. Thus, beyond the physical order as an order of existents in space-time, and beyond the psychological order in time, lies the ideational order with close associations with the psychological but with its distinctive relations of a logical character which are objective as the conditions of rational thinking.

(iv) And still beyond these orders, experience refers to another order, an order of ideas which have not arisen as composites of the experience of objects of the physical or psychological orders, but, standing above them, claim to interpret them, and in some sense control them. In reasoning there is a content of thought which is not derived genetically and is not psychologically definable. Mathematical relations, for example, rule our experience but are not established by it. Concepts acknowledge or disavow relations with other concepts with entire disregard for the psychological continuity in which they are presented. A sense of oughtness anticipates, does not wait for its cue from, experience. A subsistent order stands in contrast to what is given in experience as an existent order. An analysis of experience yields explicit reference to such an order. While never given objectively for experience it is the basis of the logical objectivity of experience.

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It is against this general frame of reference to different orders that the question arises as to the status of objects with ethical character and the import of the ethical characterizations by which these objects are classified as ethical objects. We shall now examine these orders of reference more fully with special reference to their bearing upon the import of ethical terms.

### I

#### *The Physical Order of Reference*

(a) Clearly, if it were to be maintained that ethical objects belong to the physical order, their ethical characterization being due to properties, and their properties being wholly physical properties, ethical terms would be objective, and ethical judgments might then be held to be objective in the same sense as are the judgments of physical sciences; and to be subject to truth or falsity in exactly the same way. The only question to be raised—and an important one for an attempt to develop a science of Ethics—would be that of the justification of a special science of Ethics within a field of experience already occupied by a more general science. The question would have to be answered: by what special marks are ethical phenomena distinguished from other phenomena within the general field of physical reality? It is a fact that this distinction exists. But theoretically it is possible that differentiating characteristics should be found to justify Ethics as a separate science, as Chemistry and

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Biology are separate sciences, within the general field of physical fact. Regarding this, final resort would have to be made to experience itself to ascertain by what differentia the distinction is made, and whether these are in fact differentia comparable in kind with those which mark the physical sciences from one another. That Ethics should be interpreted as a branch of physical science is quite conceivable under certain psychometaphysical theories, provided their exponents were concerned enough with ethical phenomena to carry out the project, and could maintain their interpretation in view of what it revealed.

In fact, however, materialism as a metaphysical theory, with allied psychological derivative, is not fruitful of ethical theories just because there is nothing within it to lend itself to ethical interpretation. Its quite consistent metaphysics would be a denial of intelligibility to so-called ethical or value concepts. But this denial it cannot make. If it denies the relevance of the idea of value to any discussion, it at least suggests that it knows what it denies when it refers to value.

A consideration of the definition of ethical properties, or of ethical objects with regard to their ethical character, in purely physical terms need not further detain us; for, in the first place there could be little common ground, little participation in a common universe of discourse, between those whose definition of value, or of any ethical object or property, was essentially physical and those to whom this definition seemed false. Agreement to

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participate in the discussion would have to presuppose the relevance of that to which the pure physicist would have no access. And in the second place, any arguments which will be used to prove the inadequacy of a definition of ethical terms by means of biological and psychological terms will apply a fortiori to physical definition. Specific discussion of a possible theoretical definition of ethical terms in terms of the physically inorganic need not then be entered into.

(b) But this is not by any means as obviously true of either biological objects or properties—though perhaps it ought to be. While the hypothesis that a physical object in its sheer physicalness is an ethical object is scarcely fruitful enough to be worth considering, this has not been regarded as so evidently true of Life, as is clear from the sacredness with which Life has been regarded, and the biological symbolism by which reverence for it is expressed in some religions. While this is not proof of the true ethical character of purely biological properties, it makes it impossible to dismiss the view that ethical significance inheres in biological characteristics, as could be done with the suggestion that purely physical characteristics of the inorganic order are ethical.

Still it may be said forthwith that Life, while a condition or vehicle of values, is not itself the ultimate value, and is much less the definition of value. That it is so frequently risked for other things, and is even abandoned voluntarily at times, is evidence that it is not universally valued as the



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only good as it would have to be were it the defining reference in value. And the judgment that Life under certain conditions may not be good at all is decisive proof that it is not itself what is meant by "good." Spencer, it will be remembered, early in the *Data of Ethics* abandoned it as ethically primary.

When, however, we pass from the problem of the definition of ethical properties in terms of physical or biological qualities to that of the existence of ethical objects possessing descriptively defining physical or biological properties, we require to reconsider the steps taken. For it may be true that objects which may be adequately defined as physical or biological objects are also ethical objects. It is not a priori impossible that objects which are definable on the physical or biological level may possess properties which are not physical or biological, just as it is possible that objects which may be defined as biological objects may possess psychological properties. Properties essential to its relevance in a particular universe of discourse may not be essential to an adequate definition of a given class of objects. We must, therefore, leave the question open as to whether or not there are distinctive physical or biological properties which belong to ethical objects, even though the primary question whether or not there are any terms essentially physical or biological by which ethical terms may be defined has been answered in the negative. If it is not impossible that there are physical or biological properties by

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which physical or biological objects which are also ethical objects may be adequately defined, it will remain possible that ethical theory may make use of these non-ethical terms for establishing conclusions of relevance in Ethics. For example, the conclusion may be drawn that certain properties which are concomitants of ethical properties are thereby criteria of ethics. The extent to which this concomitance was known to obtain would determine the probability of its value as a criterion. But, it will be noted, the recognition of this concomitance depends upon the prior recognition of the unique ethical import of one of the concomitant terms.

## II

### *The Psychological Order of Reference*

Having carried the question of the relation of physical sciences to Ethics up into that of the relation of biological science to ethical problems, and having indicated the nature of the problems which this latter places before us, an enquiry into the relation of psychological facts or properties to Ethics will now be made under two heads: the definition of ethical import in terms of: 1, individual, and 2, social psychology.

1. The psychological order offers a terminology which has a very much more subtle tendency than the physical or biological to become suggestive of ethical concepts. The more attenuated the physical, the more spiritual; the more spiritual, the more

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ethical; these are prejudices which have not been without their influence. It is difficult to credit Falstaff with spirituality and morality, and easy to hope that a physics of electrons lends itself more readily to a spiritual view of nature than one of molecules.

But there are more important influences leading toward Psychological Ethics. That psychological facts are subject to specific ethical predication would appear accepted in the whole course of common experience. Such psychological facts as states of pleasure, desires, dispositions of character, motives and intentions, are constantly being judged to be good or bad, right or wrong, worthy or unworthy, as objects of ethical judgment. Those who would refuse to attribute intrinsic ethical worth to a biological state would attribute instrumental ethical worth to that state if its existence were the means of assuring the existence of certain psychological states. In fact, one psychological state, that of pleasure, has so impressed observers, from the humblest with their practical interest in the securities of daily life to the speculative founders of ethical systems, with its importance that perhaps one of the strongest arguments for hedonism is the wellnigh universal assent which is given to the claims of pleasure for a place, if not the exclusive place, as a good, in contrast to the divergence of opinion that prevails regarding so many other ethical views of goods.

But quite a different question is introduced when we consider the possibility of *defining* ethical

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terms by reference to these psychological objects or properties to which we so readily attribute ethical character. Whether we may hold that ethical objects belong to the biological or psychological orders, is one question. Whether we may hold that in belonging to these orders they possess some property definable in terms of the psychological properties either of themselves or some other objects, by virtue of which they become ethical objects, is another question. It might be held, for example, that a given object's ethical character is to be defined in terms of some psychological character which it also possesses; or it might be held that an object's ethical character is to be defined in terms of some psychological condition which it causes to exist in some other object or community of objects. An example of the first case would be the definition of a man's goodness in terms of his own satisfaction, peace of mind or happy disposition. The second case is illustrated by any definition of an object's goodness in terms of the satisfaction or pleasure which it gives a person or community of persons perceiving or possessing it.

It will be recognized that the problem of the definition of ethical terms has reached a new stage when psychological factors enter. For psychological facts belong definitely upon the subject side of an obvious division, and definition of ethical properties will become subjective and possibly highly ambiguous, if psychological terms are used in certain ways in that definition. This would not be

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so in the case of definition in terms of physical or biological properties. Subjectivity would be the more marked in its effect upon the character of ethical predication because of the fact that, while physical and biological properties are largely fixed and comparatively constant, psychological conditions are notoriously unstable. Relativity in Ethics, if ethical characteristics were definable by reference to physical or biological conditions, would yield a standard of reference which is dependable and constant compared with that which could be offered by reference to psychological conditions, unless the stability of these were assured by restricting qualifications.

To use the most obvious example; if the psychological reference in defining an ethical term were pleasure, unqualified to restrict its use to pleasure within certain limits, such as pleasure for me, or pleasure for a particular community of persons, or for a majority of all persons, the way would be left open for an interpretation which would make it possible that contradictory propositions maintained by different persons should be equally true, or that contradictory propositions maintained by the same person at different times should be equally true. Response to a particular object with pleasure is not by any means constant in the case of one individual, and certainly not constant for different individuals. If, therefore, its pleasure-giving quality be the defining reference in predicating value of an object, each such predication would have to be safeguarded by almost innumer-

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able references to the person or persons whose pleasure is meant and the exact conditions under which the pleasure was experienced, in order to avoid the assertion of verbally contradictory statements as though they were equally true propositions. Unless so safeguarded by qualifications, the only way in which one could contradict another's value judgment would be by denying that his psychological state was the state of pleasure which he declared it to be.

Qualifications of this nature appear in ethical theory in the attempt to reach objectivity by asserting general agreement upon objects of desire, where good is held to mean that which a community agrees in desiring. It is a plausible assumption that Mill had such agreement in the desire for pleasure in mind as a basis for the psychological hedonism which he adopted as a premise of Utilitarianism.

But it may be maintained that a survey of all the conditions under which pleasurable experience occurs reveals these as being conditions under which there also occurs what is said to be a value judgment, and that, therefore, the presumption is that a value judgment is in essence a predication of pleasurable-ness. The presumption should, however, be in exactly the other direction. For if pleasurable-ness be sufficient to give full import to the predication of value, it may be asked how it occurred that a new term should have arisen, or, in case this was a mere verbal accident, how it should have come to connote for so many some-

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thing different from pleasurable. Again, in view of the fact that value judgments of negative quality are passed upon some pleasures in spite of the pleasurable which may undoubtedly be predicated, it would appear that something significantly different from pleasure is meant in value predication. These arguments would apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to other psychological states used as definitions for ethical terms.

How then, it may be asked, was it possible that an identification of a psychological term, such as pleasure, with value should have come to have a place in ethical theory?

Several influences would operate to make it seem that a psychological definition of value is needed.

(1) First among these is the natural psychological tendency to analysis, supported by the logical necessity that thought should approach the mass of facts given in experience analytically; that scientific procedure should be insistently analytic. It, therefore, appears to be scientific, as indeed it is wholesomely scientific, to question every assumption that an irreducible has been reached. By analogy, the demand that physical analysis should never be assumed to have culminated in the simple is applied to meanings as the demand that no meaning should be assumed to have been reduced to simple terms.

(2) This is supported, in its general tendency, by the principle of parsimony, which may be applied to the experience of value, as demanding

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that if possible this experience should be described in terms of known psychological facts of an order simpler and more primitive than the value experience itself.

(3) Again, what may be referred to as "conditioned" predication may influence ethical judgment. When two judgments are associated through their predication of concomitant properties, there will be a tendency for the predication of one property under certain conditions to become identified with the predication of the other, and for that property to be made the defining term which belongs to the psychologically more primitive order. For example, time is referred to in terms of clock readings, with a tendency to identify it with these readings. This tendency becomes the more marked when psychological states such as those of fear and anger are taken to be identical with the physical states which are concomitant.

In the case of value, if the judgment predicating value of a class of objects be associated with the predication of psychological character, such as pleasurable-ness, of that same class of objects, there will be a tendency to identify the predication of value with that of the psychological character, and for the term of the lower order to become the defining term. The conditions under which this tendency will operate will include uncontradicted concomitance, and the tendency will be greatly enhanced should one property be actually predicable of the other, as, for example, value may be actually predicable of pleasureableness.



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These three tendencies combine to give much plausibility to psychological definitions of value.<sup>1</sup> The tendency to make conditioned predications supports the tendency to analysis in offering a psychological concomitant which is the same as that which analysis yields as psychologically simpler than value. What is psychologically simpler as being more primitive, is then regarded as logically simpler and adopted as though yielded in the logical analysis of value. Thus the principle of parsimony becomes fallaciously applied. In any case, this principle must be used with great caution, for the fact that in the cognitive relation certain experiences have arisen at all—and here special significance attaches to the experience of value—suggests that a progressively developing experience in which new meanings “emerge” may make it impossible that they should ever be adequately defined, or their objective reference described, by reference to that out of which they have arisen. Their import must have had its reality in an order of potential realization of meaning, which is also an a priori condition of experience.

The tendency to resort to psychological definition of value is by no means unnatural. Valuation is devoid of the organic and objective conditions which are obviously connected with sensing. Valuation is itself wholly an inward process. Also, in their very nature it is easier to define some

<sup>1</sup> Further discussion of the influence of psychological concomitants is given later, when the emotional view of valuation is considered.

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things by that which conditions them than by that in which their nature lies. It is because the subject-matter of Ethics has for its ultimate reference that which gives existence its final meaning, that, through fallacious definition, an escape is sought from the seemingly feeble argument that the inexplicable has been reached. But if intuitionism's claim to have reached the irreducible may seem to belong to a strategy of escape, equally truly may hardheaded insistence on definition. There is a shade of irony in the fact that intuitionism's escape is made under claim of the discovery of fact, while hardmindedness escapes the necessity of acknowledging the unique by retracing ground already laid out in known patterns. Not infrequently the hardminded make a compensating escape into the enjoyment of the arts.

A fundamental distinction underlies the present argument. If within a given field of reference there are objects defined by terms belonging to that field of reference but possessing characteristics unusual, or non-essential to that particular field, two ways of explaining them are open. On the one hand, they may be shown to be unique particular cases of the combination of properties of the field of reference within which the objects themselves are defined. Thus, for example, psychological facts including valuations might be interpreted as particular cases of physical facts resting upon particular combinations of physical properties. The essential difference between physical and psychological facts, under this interpretation, would not

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rest upon a difference in *essence* but upon difference in the combinations of properties which are essentially the same. Having affirmed this much, the way would then be open to claim that what is known as the beauty of a statue, let us say, lies in that particular combination of physical properties within itself by which the statue sets up psychological, i.e. essentially physical, reactions toward itself on the part of that physical combination of properties known conventionally for descriptive purposes as a person. That is, in terms of that which he, as person, essentially is, an individual in pronouncing a statue beautiful in reality means that it is in some essential sense a particular case of what he himself is. Modesty forbids that some should go this far.

There is an alternative. Objects which exist in one order of being may possess qualities which are of another order. Some would say that they have "emerged" into a new order in which they may be characterized in an altogether new way without having lost the properties of the order from which they have emerged. Without resting the case upon any theory as to how the new fact has come into existence, we may claim that there is something *essentially* new when, by a combination of physical properties, a thing of beauty is produced. It is "*essentially* new" for it is incapable of being defined or described in terms of its physical elements: a non-physical *element* is there.

With this statement of the case, a sheer deadlock may be reached between those who claim that they

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mean by æsthetic qualities something entirely different from what could possibly be interpreted as physical qualities, however complex their conformation, and those, on the other hand, who regard such claims as belonging to the prescientific age of "idols." Division must arise between those who refuse to move out of a given field of reference and those who refuse to remain in it. It should be said, however, that there is no a priori reason for maintaining that the particular superstition of those who move out leads of necessity to idol worship any more than that of those who elect to remain in. Devotion to the principle of parsimony should be scrutinized for evidence of fallacious simplification just as surely as the claim of simplicity for a concept should be scrutinized under the guidance of the principle of parsimony.

The fact is there—a psychological fact, if you will—that there are qualities even in physical objects for the explanation of which some regard themselves forced to refer beyond natural properties. There is, perhaps, less hope of driving them back into the physical field of reference than of persuading others to come out of it. They believe that which, if it be true, makes it logically fallacious for them to resort finally to naturalistic terminology to describe certain facts of their experience. The phenomena force them outside these limits. If phenomena of which we are reasonably certain cannot adequately be included in a given frame of reference then that frame must be extended to include them, unless we can be convinced that

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they are not real. But if unreal, how then explain the certainty in so many minds that a new category is needed beyond the categories under which a naturalistic explanation is offered? The problem is an entirely different one from that of explaining a concept which rests upon some imaginative configuration of given physical elements, which remains physical in its character. In the case under discussion it is claimed that insight into reality through a new *meaning* has been gained. It has already been shown that if this be the case this meaning cannot be analysed through a description of the process by which the cognitive experience of an object to which it attaches becomes possible.

The issues which have so far been raised may be illustrated by a hypothetical case in which the non-physical value character of a physical object causes a valuational response on the part of a subject, and in which there is attributed to the physical object a character which is frequently regarded as a projection upon it of what is in fact a psychological condition of the subject. This example introduces at once the questions of: the existence of value-objects which are physical; the physical or non-physical determination and definition of the value characterization; and the subjective or objective determination of the value judgment's import.

Two entirely different attitudes toward and judgments upon an ancient painting, let us say, may result from its examination by the same individual. Conceivably, for the sake of the discovery of

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some lost pigment or process, a work of art might be given into the hands of a chemist for a complete analysis which would destroy it. The result of his examination would be a formula and measurements from which no intelligible interpretation of the picture could ever be made, however faultless the analysis and however useful to artists the rediscovery of the material used might be.

But before beginning his analysis a pronouncement entirely irrelevant to his professional task might be made by the chemist, in declaring the picture to be beautiful. The results of his chemical analysis would generally be held to be entirely objective, colour descriptions with the rest. Any competent chemist would be expected to reach the same results. The judgment that the picture is beautiful is of quite a different order. Two equally competent chemists might publicly differ with regard to the beauty of the picture without breach of professional etiquette, while agreeing upon its analysis as a physical object. *De gustibus non est disputandum* would be regarded as perfectly justifying their æsthetic disagreement by some to whom nothing could justify a professional disagreement in chemical analysis. The principle of the subjectivity of æsthetic judgments is considered placed on record in this proverb, which, in common with many others, sustains an *argumentum ad verecundiam* which is denied with utmost conviction in the common judgments of many who resort to its shelter as a convention.

But the point of issue is that, both with regard

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to the nature of the property referred to and the nature of its apprehension, when a work of art's physical properties are being analysed, we are in a different order of things from that in which its beauty is assessed. The example given illustrates the problem which may be carried over, with perhaps even more point, from the sphere of æsthetics to that of ethics; namely, the problem of the nature of the reality of those qualities which are not of the same order as the objects of which they are predicated, and their subjective or objective determination.

It will be obvious that some judgments are, by primary import, subjective in the sense that they are intended as expressions of the subject's psychological state with regard to the object. They are intended as objective statements regarding this subjective state. But the form in which the judgment is expressed conceals the real nature of the propositions entertained in the judgment at least to the extent that they may, formally, be presented as judgments upon the object, rather than, as in fact they are, judgments making affirmations regarding the subject. Such judgments are typified by the following statements: "The story was tiresome," "His courage was thrilling," "The faith of the father in his son was pathetic." The very characterization of the subject-term of the judgment, i.e. of the object which is ostensibly the subject of the judgment, is in terms of its effects upon the judging self.

It is not maintained that these propositions are

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without valuation import. The point is rather that they may be of valuation import. But the import is read into them, not found in them. That is, they may include, as part of discourse, a propositional content which is not contained in the strict interpretation of the judgment as it is expressed. Something is meant other than what is, strictly speaking, said. This may do very well where inexactness passes current in popular intercourse or there is accepted reference to an already characterized universe of reference within which discourse is taking place. But there is always danger in allowing too great liberty in the enrichment of terms by marginal import which is not part of their real meaning; and it surely must be the aim of science to make the expression of its judgments conform to the propositional content which they actually entertain. It should, therefore, be insisted upon that, when we come to critical analysis of meaning, if a judgment is intended to convey valuational information it should not be expressed in terms whose actual meaning may be regarded as wholly psychological. And, further, if value import may be read into a proposition which strictly speaking is psychological, there is, thereby, an implicit acknowledgment of that which is not merely psychological but is in some sense objective in its valuational import. Consideration of this source of difficulty was given when the problem of the differentiation of ethical judgments from other judgments was examined into.

Before passing from the examination of psycho-



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logical considerations we may note at least one contribution which has been made by modern Psychology to Ethics. Whatever has happened to its own subject-matter through the method, an objective method in Psychology has revealed the futility of lingering in a twilight margin of psychological facts with the expectation that as our eyes become accustomed to them they will be discovered to be a realm of value ideas. Psychology has sharpened the issue. If values are to be defined in terms of Psychology then we may know explicitly where the definition leads us. If that is not what we mean by values then we must go elsewhere for their explanation.

2. We shall consider under the psychological order a form of theory which seeks to overcome the tendency to subjectivism which is inherent in defining ethical terms by reference to individual attitudes, by regarding the defining attitudes as those of social communities. In recognizing a favourable social collective attitude toward an object an individual may accept this attitude as a criterion by which to interpret his own, and by which to check what would otherwise be a valuation based upon a purely individual reaction. Thus Bouglé maintains<sup>1</sup> that in judgments of value the individual refers beyond his personal impressions to forms which dominate in the society in which he lives. Hence, following Durkheim, values may be held to be objective because imperative, and imperative because collective. The objectivity of

<sup>1</sup> *Evolution of Values*, pp. 14 ff.

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value as attested by its imperative nature is a view which will be maintained in the closing chapter of this discussion, but not on grounds such as underlie sociological definitions of value inherent in any view that an object's value is constituted by some collective attitude toward it.

When views are offered which suggest that some factor in group-psychology may be made the definition of value we must avoid confusion as to what is implied in such theories. That values are socially *created* and are transmitted in a social order, and that a society educated in the recognition of these values will generally be in agreement in value judgments, may be admitted. But when this fact leads to statements that values are objects which a social community agrees in desiring, or that a value is "a permanent possibility of satisfactions,"<sup>1</sup> or that values are "products of a sort of synthesis of consciousness,"<sup>2</sup> a number of questions ought to be raised. Setting aside the question of the validity of the group-psychology underlying such views, it may be asked: just what is being claimed, and what claim may be sustained regarding the relation of collective attitudes to objects?

(a) Is the exponent of such a view defining *value* or *values*? Frequently it appears quite evident that it is *values*, and if so no objection need be taken to the claim that there are exceedingly general psychological attitudes toward values and that wide agreement in these attitudes on the part

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Evolution of Values*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

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of social communities provides a certain degree of confirmative evidence that certain objects are in fact values. But this is not definition of value.

(b) Again it may be asked whether exponents of this view are not confusing the fact that value is attributed in high degree to social agreements, co-operative attitudes, sympathetic participation in common interests, all of which have *value*, with the definition of value in terms of these social facts; whereas they could never have been known as values were there no prior value notion by which they could be characterized.

(c) There is little doubt that the attitudes of great communities are often psychologically affected in such a way as to affect their value-judgments. Thus in a recent work, *The Reconstruction of India*, Dr. Edward Thompson says of Gandhi: "He has set in action emotions and hopes that are far wider than any political grouping. He has definitely shifted the course of a people's ways—the way of many peoples."<sup>1</sup> What is regarded as of value is often determined by social factors. But the fact that History is able at later periods to pass judicial comment upon movements in which collective influences played dominating parts, bears evidence of reference to some criterion other than the collective attitude, or any collective attitude which, in the nature of the case, is transitory.

Even the argument that social agreement pro-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from a letter by J. D. Jenkins appearing in *The Spectator*, London, June 2, 1933.

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vides a criterion of the high probability that a presumptive value is in fact a genuine value is not wholly convincing. Agreement reached upon a psychological level cannot be a safe criterion of agreement upon the logical level. And customs and laws which presumably represent a consensus of community opinion may be said, without cynicism, often to have either never actually conserved the higher values or to have been retained, because of conservatism, long after they have ceased to serve any value other than that of partially standardizing conduct. Not only do such so-called collective products fail to define *value*, but they often fail even to provide for the maintaining of *values*.

Though a sociological definition of value merely shifts the argument from the psychology of the individual to that of the race it has the advantage of apparently raising the issue above the eccentricities of individual desire, or the particular circumstances of any particular period of history. A custom is a racial product in which, it might be assumed, only the fittest forms of conduct, upon the survival of which the majority of individuals have agreed, will actually survive. These forms of conduct supposedly conserve the values upon the survival of which the majority have agreed. It should be noted, however, that the assumption that these are the fittest for the individual or society, may lead in two directions. The surviving "fittest" may be either that which survives because it is the best the rest of society will allow the individual, that is, the

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fullest satisfaction which experience has taught him he can safely seek in view of other individuals and their struggle for satisfaction; or that which has been adopted because in co-operation a satisfaction has been found which is felt to be greater than the individual could gain even by satisfying the desires which he has to compete to satisfy. Custom may be that to which society has settled down as the condition in which just enough satisfaction may be gained without so much opposition that it is overbalanced by effort to gain more. Or custom may be that to which society has risen in co-operating for the attainment of a satisfaction which can only be gained by co-operation, because the group is able to gain a new kind of satisfaction impossible to even unopposed individual fulfilment of desire; or because there is satisfaction in social co-operation in itself.

Thus the theory of evolved community attitudes can account for the psychological immediacy and feeling of certainty of most value judgments which millenniums of human experience have taught us to make. It also accounts for conflicts of conscience in other cases where accident may bring into opposition two different value-judgments which formerly had operated in distinct fields of conduct. It accounts for that mysterious objective authority which conscience exercises, for it explains it as the demand of an almost ageless social order which has met the subtle changes of a growingly complex situation in which it has not only had to give advice to each succeeding generation, but

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require obedience from it. But it cannot transform the meaning of a social "Thou Shalt" into the meaning of an "I Ought" which uniquely marks ethical consciousness. Were value-consciousness wholly a social product it would be impossible to account for those cases in which, when most conscious of the pressure upon one of social opinion, one is also conscious of questioning the rightness of social opinion, and hence of judging it rather than being judged by its standard.

And further, even if the majority of value-judgments were in the form of assertions that the satisfaction of some instinctive social tendency is good, there would be no justification for the simple conversion of the statement as though it were a definition of good. For when such an assertion is made no merely analytic statement is intended, but one attributing goodness to the satisfaction of a social tendency. While a moral judgment may be passed upon a psychological state, a purely psychological state at the level of satisfaction of tendency could never *be*, at any stage of its evolution, a judgment.

In "Futility" Gerhardi portrays a good dame who accepts with almost unperturbed resignation her place as party to a most hopeless confusion of family irregularities, and still is indignant at the disrespect shown their father by the three daughters of her own daughter's married suitor, because "there are things that in our hearts we know we mustn't do." While it is true that a social-consciousness theory may readily account

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for there being a fairly large variety of "things that in our hearts we know we mustn't do," and while it is often true that what is taken for the voice of conscience is just what one "feels very strongly about," perhaps mostly for psychological reasons, there are the rarer cases in which the true differentiating characteristic of consciousness of obligation is brought out, indicating that we meet certain situations with nothing but a sense of obligation based on consciousness that values are involved and that an impartial judgment is required, no matter how we may be involved in the situation. And we are conscious that decision must issue in conduct which could be justified on grounds of an ultimate nature, just as truly as must the conclusions of a process of reasoning.

Here the distinction between a judgment and feeling is fundamental. A feeling may emerge out of the kind of indefinite background which lends itself to description as social-consciousness. A judgment is a clear-cut individual matter. The universality of judgment is not its capacity for becoming lost in the general human background of its origins, but is in its power to demand assent on the part of every other individual. And the demand is made not on the assumption that every other mind is a similar social product, but that it is an individual thinking centre working on the same principles.

It may be that cases of true value judgment are rarer than we think, and that the emotional attitude which often passes under the name is

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what is usually meant by valuation. But the contention here maintained is that there is this other thing which we call value-judgment as distinct from feeling; and that it is really implicit in what is meant when we "feel" obligation.

### III

#### *The Ideational Order of Reference*

To draw exact lines between the organic and the inorganic realms, between the physiological and the psychological, and between individual and social psychological orders of reference, is difficult enough. It is still more difficult exactly to define the third order which we are now to consider. This may be referred to in general terms as the order of personal experience. It is of a twofold nature, being a series of successive psychological states but also in its coherence something more than merely a series. Witness is borne to this by reflection upon our own experience and by reference to other persons who are given as objects of experience through a series of their states, but are also known by direct insight into their personal integrity of being. While recognizing its twofold nature we cannot, by a bifurcation of personality, successfully assign persons in part to the psychological order and in part to a rational order, for in fact we experience them as a unity of the characteristics of both orders which is not quite exactly either. The Ideational Order would, therefore, be ambiguously defined if it were referred to as



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personal, though it is the order of rational personal experience. By some this order would, doubtless, be included as an extension of the psychological. This, however, would be to define its characteristic mark, rationality, in psychological terms, wholly obscuring the essential character of judgment as entertaining propositions.<sup>1</sup> Nor may we refer to it without qualification as the rational order, for rationality has an extensional reference which is not exhausted by reference to personal experience and thought processes.<sup>2</sup> We shall, therefore, refer to this as the Ideational Order of Reference, a term intended to be less rich in connotation than "personal," less formal than "rational," and still intended to signify the realm of thought which has rationality as its distinctive mark. Having made this qualification we may revert to the use of the term "rationality" without misunderstanding.

Two questions are to be considered with reference to this order, namely, the relevance of its rationality to the import of ethical terms, and, in the second place, its relation to the apprehension of ethical facts and the verification of ethical judgments.

In the first place there is an ambiguity in the use of the term "rational" of which account must be taken. When we seek in experience for a mark of what being a personal subject means one fact

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter iv, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. The Ideal, A Priori Order, which is the final order of reference to be considered.

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meets us directly. From the inner order of experience consciously held ideas assert their meanings in a twofold manner; by direct objective reference beyond themselves, and by intensional reference to other ideas. The primary reference of an idea, objectively directed outward beyond the subjective realm of experience, must not be obscured by emphasis upon its reflective use in definition and inference, under laws of validity.

A secondary reference is that of ideas to ideas in definition, in predication and in inference. A not inconsiderable part of thinking consists in the attempt to understand ideas more clearly by defining them by reference to more simple ideas. In doing so, reference must always be made to some idea which has its meaning prior to the definition, for thought is essentially a meaningful process, and, as has already been shown,<sup>1</sup> some irreducible meanings must give thinking its import if it is to have meaning at all. In its objective reference thought must, therefore, finally rest upon the validity of ideas which are incapable of analysis and which in their entire simplicity are final ways of characterizing reality. Two aspects of rationality may thus be distinguished: that of formal validity on the one hand, and on the other that of the validity of objective reference for experience and for conduct. In addition to these, "rationalism" as a metaphysical theory of ethics requires notice as it seeks to interpret the phenomena of ethical experience.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter iii.

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(I) We shall first consider rationality and the defining of ethical import.

In view of the highly significant place which we give to persons, members of the rational order, in our realm of values, it is particularly relevant to ask how far we identify their value with rationality. For if consideration of those who are most obviously rational and are most highly valued is found to lead us to conclude that their rationality does not define their value, it will be evident that rationality cannot be held to define value.

(a) It seems evident that we do not, in fact, allow the poverty of formal rationality as a defining characteristic to consume either the wealth of meaning of those who constitute the order of personal rational beings, or the wealth of values which we share with them and which are not defined by reference to reason at all. If this be true, an attempt to define value by reference to formal rationality must rest under suspicion of inadequacy, for those who possess this characteristic most specifically are valued without explicit reference to it, and many things which are not defined by reference to rationality are valued. While therefore we may recognize that apart from rationality, giving coherence both to that which is valued and to our experience, both values and valuation would be impossible, and while it may be true that rationality enters into the constitution of the highest values which we experience, the conclusion should not be drawn that it defines value, but rather that it is valued

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and forms a constituent factor in personal values, giving continuity and coherence to things valued, rather than constituting the meaning of the value attributed to them.

(b) Similarly when we consider rationality from the standpoint of thought's objective reference we confront an aspect of personality which has high importance for personal values, while it is incapable of forming part of the definition of value. Personal relations are based upon the fact that persons are capable of objective reference to one another and to an order of values known in common. These relations, enhancing as they do every experience of value through mutual sharing and participation, and constituting the deepest values which we experience, are based upon rationality. But while rationality enters into their constitution, forming the *sine qua non* of personal intercourse, it does not define their value. Holding together, as it were, the diverse elements which enter into personalities, and which enter into our own experience, and serving as a condition of intercommunication between persons, rationality has the highest kind of importance for values. But the very fact that we value it indicates that it is not what we mean by value. Furthermore, part of the value which we attribute to it is due to its conditioning rather than its intrinsic character.

Nothing which has been said is intended to minimize the great significance of rationality for the moral life, nor its altogether necessary place in the life of those valued as persons. What we

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know persons to be, and value in them, is an integrity of personal character of which reason is a co-ordinating principle. But neither is what we value in them identical with their rationality nor is what we mean by their value identical with what we mean by their rationality. We may conclude, then, that while rationality has great significance for the definition of personality, which is a value, it is irrelevant as a definition of value itself. Value is not defined by rationality, for it is attributed to rationality and to those who are rational, without tautology.

(c) In addition to its value significance as characteristic of thought in its objective reference and as a coherent process, rationality has influenced ethical theory through its metaphysical significance. The search for a principle by which to explain the experienced universe has led to a form of metaphysical rationalism which has tended to identify that which in some final sense *is* the characteristic of the universe as a system, with that which ought to be. Support is given to this tendency by theological and metaphysical optimism; by the actual value of rationality and the imperative "ought" which it carries in its own right; and also by the fact which we have already noted, that when analysis of personality does take place, that which we value most highly is recognized to be uniquely rational in character. The further fact is also fairly evident in common experience that rationality as a principle for ethics serves to overcome relativism through its insistence

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upon coherence and comprehensiveness. It thus takes on metaphysical import for ethical theory. Conceived narrowly, value may be relative to personal desire. But this relativity may be overcome by giving value a metaphysical interpretation in which this character is quite transformed. An example in recent ethical theory is found in *The Philosophical Basis of Moral Obligation* in which Professor Turner maintains that "the primitive consciousness. . . of value arises upon the basis of the satisfaction of individual desires."<sup>1</sup> "Satisfaction," however, "becomes associated more and more with factors altogether different from itself, such as the general conditions which confer upon it stability and persistence."<sup>2</sup> "Desire must be related to the subject's whole nature."<sup>3</sup> And value's meaning must be known with reference to completion or perfection; "value is the capacity to produce or to confer completion or perfection, either wholly or in part."<sup>4</sup>

The relation of value to completion, if what is being completed will then be "perfection," is fairly obvious. If, as Professor Turner maintains earlier in the argument, the ultimate philosophical basis of ethics is in "the conception of the universe as an endlessly evolving, organized and systematic Whole, ever advancing in heterogeneity, in richness and in value,"<sup>5</sup> value consciousness actually provides an ultimate interpreting principle. That

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophical Basis of Moral Obligation*, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

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it should do so is right and proper. But if it does, and if there be evidence that the universe is "an endlessly evolving, organized and systematic Whole, ever advancing in heterogeneity, in richness," then, unless evolving implies progress and richness implies value, it would still remain to be asked whether this is also an advance "in value." If this be the case, then it may be held to be advancing not only toward completion but also toward perfection. There is no ground, however, apart from a genuine use of the concept of value, for a co-ordination of value with any other metaphysical principle; *a fortiori*, none for an identification. Ethical objectivity cannot be swallowed up in metaphysical victory.

Before passing to the discussion of the apprehension of value a note maybe added with regard to the objective reference of ethical ideas and judgments. Nothing said about the direct objective reference of ideas as part of their rationality is intended to suggest an uncritical realistic intuitionism. As epistemological realism should be critical with regard to the immediacy of the reference of experience to its object, so should ethical intuitionism, as a doctrine of the direct apprehension of value, be critical with regard to the exact nature of the object to which reference is made in ethical judgment. What is projectively attributed in a common-sense realistic way to a remote object, without reference to a mediating physical and psychological process—as in colour perception, for example—may be more critically conceived as

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having its objective reference to a complex situation which comprises a number of factors. Similarly, what in valuation is conceived as the object valued may, upon critical analysis, prove to be only one of the conditions comprising a whole which was the actual value. That a rational, moral being may apprehend complex wholes as values and pass true value judgments upon them, is no argument for the assumption that he must either always apprehend the most significant values in a situation or pass non-erroneous judgments upon them. Critical ethical intuitionism does not assume the infallibility of ethical judgment, but it maintains that ethical terms when truly predicated in ethical judgments have direct and unique reference. In this lies their rationality, their validity for thought and for conduct. The place of verification in ethical cognition does not differ essentially from its place in any process of knowing, though the conditions to be known, and to be known under, may be unusually complex in the case of ethical knowledge.

(II) While our consideration of rationality as characterizing the ideational order has been primarily directed to the question of the definition of value in terms of rationality, this is an appropriate place to consider the problem of the rational nature of the apprehension of value. It is especially necessary to be clear with regard to theories of the emotional apprehension of value in view of the fact that views of such emotional apprehension may be fallaciously identified with views of the



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definition of value in terms of emotional experience.

The wide difference between the character of the objective reference in the case of the natural properties of objects and of their values finds a corresponding distinction in the theory of the mode of apprehension in the case of values, as compared with natural properties. This distinction has been marked by designating value apprehension as emotional in character. This designation must be guardedly adopted, for the avoidance of the use of the term intellectual apprehension, with its rationalistic implications, and its replacement by the term feeling, or emotional apprehension, tends to throw doubt upon ethical judgment's rationality of *content*, whereas, if the function of idea to bear true relation to existents through its valid objective reference be also part of its rationality, this holds just as truly of ethical ideas as of any other. The reference to valuational apprehension as other than intelligent invites the suspicion that it is sub-intelligent unless it be very particularly pointed out that feeling in this case belongs to the rational or ideational order, not merely the psychological. In this case may it not be called rational apprehension with less ambiguity than feeling? If the feeling apprehension of value were purely psychological then the properties felt would be of the same level as those other natural properties which are realistically attributed to natural existents by which feeling reactions are aroused. If, on the other hand,

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ethical properties are non-natural some other explanation of their apprehension would seem necessary.

We must first note that a clear distinction must be maintained between emotional response to value when experienced, and emotional response as evidence of experienced value. "Now about a God," said Mr. Gissing, a philosophizing dog whose quest was "Where the Blue Begins," "instinct tells us that there is one, for when I think about Him I find that I unconsciously wag my tail a little."<sup>1</sup> The rather neat *hysteron proteron* of this argument has its counterpart in the assurance that when our feelings wag in a certain way, our heads may safely nod assent.

That there is a feeling concomitant associated with every value judgment may not only be admitted but asserted as an explanation of the prevalence of the view that we *feel* values, and the prevalence of the fact that we judge at all. Psychologically, motive is throughout associated with feeling, and unmotivated thinking is something of which we can have no experience. That objects should call from us emotional responses of some character, directly or indirectly, is a condition of their being objects upon which judgment is passed. In the case of value judgments there is an additional reason for the association of emotion with judgment, for an object consciously valued has a characteristic emotional effect upon the subject valuing it. But while value elicits, and is

<sup>1</sup> *Where the Blue Begins*, by Christopher Morley (New York).

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not created by or apprehended by means of, an emotional attitude, the constant association of feeling with valuation readily lends itself to support a theory of value apprehension through the characteristic emotional response elicited when a value is recognized. This will call for further discussion, but first we may note another common use of the term feeling as in every-day usage we resort to feeling for the explanation of these certainties which lend themselves to no proof. We feel the force of axioms. We also claim to feel the relevance of propositions for an argument into which they are introduced, and to feel the irrelevance of others. The certainty of relevance cannot be referred beyond itself for support, it must be felt. Similarly the transition from premises to valid conclusion is immediately felt. When reasoning reaches that which requires or allows no further regress we are apt to say that we feel the logical necessity of the ultimate which has been reached. If, therefore, value apprehension be said to be through feeling, and at the same time feeling is divorced from its more popular connotations and ambiguities and definitely linked to intellectual insight, often synonymous even in popular terminology with intuition, it may be maintained that the feeling and the intellectual apprehension of values are two ways of saying the same thing.

But if we reject the psychological feeling account as an inadequate account of the value judgment, while the emotional concomitant of

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that judgment is recognized, what explanation may be given of that unique feeling attitude by which ethical situations are so often "sensed"? In seeking an answer to this question—a question which must arise in any attempt to analyse the phenomenon of value apprehension which the ideational order presents to us—the further question requires to be asked: What is it toward which feeling exists in the apprehension of value? Value, or values? That which is the characterizing quality or concept; or the objects, the substantives which are characterized?

A number of views are theoretically possible.

(a) It may be held that in common with all objects, ethical objects through their non-ethical properties arouse emotional response in addition to the cognitive response by which they become objects of knowledge. While toward all objects of experience minds stand in both emotional and valuational relation, certain kinds of emotional response gradually come to be recognized as the concomitants of the cognition of value and are given unique significance because of this concomitance, though essentially non-cognitive, and aroused by non-ethical qualities.<sup>1</sup>

(b) It may be held that there is unique feeling response to values because the property of value has the capacity of stimulating this unique form of

<sup>1</sup> Thus pleasurable responses, originally upon a purely psychological level, stimulated by purely physical properties, might come to be assigned the status of value criteria. The possibility of this will be increased if certain psychological responses themselves have value.

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response, in addition to and independently of its recognition as value. In this case the cognitive response might, on occasion, conceivably be lacking, while the emotional response took place, and thus support be given to the erroneous view that the emotional response was cognitive.

(c) Or, the emotional element might be either the emotional apprehension, or an emotion associated with the apprehension of value as an essence which is attributed to the object as constituted by its properties, but is not itself a property of the object; or, on the other hand, which is attributed to the object as a property in addition to the other properties which constitute it. An ethical object in being ethically characterized would, in this case, elicit emotional response because the apprehension of its ethical character as such calls forth feeling.

(d) Or, finally, it may be maintained that, while its essential value character is intellectually apprehended when an object is judged to be an ethical object, still when so apprehended as a value there is a unique psychological response in feeling toward the *object*. That is: it is not the essence "value" which is emotionally apprehended and attributed to an object which thereby becomes a known value and an object of emotion derivatively; but the essence "value" intellectually apprehended and attributed to the object as its essential characteristic as a value, constitutes the object *a value* to which there is as such an emotional response of a unique kind.

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In favour of this latter interpretation it may be argued: emotional response under the situation here given would be a response in time and under conditions familiar as explaining emotion; namely, the presence of an object which is experienced by the subject as a value and to which characteristic emotional response is made. The unique character of the emotional response would be explained as due to the unique character of its object apprehended as a value.

This view explains the close relation between interest in an object and recognition of its value, and on the other hand lack of interest and non-recognition of value, thus explaining the strong influence of the theory that value is to be defined by interest. In fact it appears wellnigh beyond controversy that no object is valued without being an object of interest, and no object is an object of interest without being valued. The force of this fact as evidence of an interest definition breaks down not through a break-down of the strict concomitance, but because there is not direct concomitant variation, as there should be if interest and value were intensional equivalents. While some element of interest is always present toward an object which is valued, interest as consciously maintained may actually decrease as consciousness of value increases. For example, the interest in a work of art may give place to consciousness of value in which the element of interest almost ceases to be recognized; whereas in other cases, such as a work of art of some

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particularly grotesque type, interest may predominate over consciousness of value. Facts judged to be of great evil may be of extreme interest, and may even be regarded as of greater evil because of their interest-eliciting character, than if they had been evil but uninteresting. It is quite conceivable that the devil far outdoes most saints as an object of interest. But here the objects judged require scrutiny for intrinsic and extrinsic values with which they may be endowed by, or may endow, their devotees.

That emotion should be associated in ethical theory with the apprehension of value is therefore altogether natural in view of the fact that objects of value are so generally responded to emotionally, and some of our most genuinely ethical affirmations, as when we speak of *feeling* obligation, are expressed in terms of feeling. This very fact makes it the more imperative that every precaution should be taken to avoid the suggestion of identity between valuation and its emotional concomitant. As we have laboured the necessity of distinguishing between emotional response to an object and the definition and import of its value, so here we must ask whether the distinction must not also hold between any kind of emotional or feeling relation to the object valued, and the apprehension of its value; and whether we should not regard valuational apprehension as intellectual rather than emotional.

The contention of the late Canon Rashdall on this point is emphatic against the "feeling"

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interpretation of ethical apprehension. He writes: "It is therefore a matter of vital importance to Ethics to maintain that the moral faculty is rational—that it belongs to the intellectual part of our nature, and is not a mere matter of feeling or emotion."<sup>1</sup>

A possible source of ambiguity must be guarded against at this point. That valuation takes place under definable psychological conditions, and hence may have laws of its occurrence, must obviously be distinguished from the view that the nature of the process described in the laws of valuation, psychologically considered, constitutes the intensional import of the notion itself. An example may be offered.

In *Valuation: its Nature and Laws*, Professor Urban maintains that "the psychological equivalent of the worth predicate is always a feeling." It is clear that what is being considered here is the psychology of valuation, not necessarily the actual mode of value apprehension. As there may be at the same time a psychology of the process of colour perception, let us say, and an epistemological theory of colour perception, so there may be a psychology of valuation and also a theory of value apprehension which includes reference to the psychological conditions of perception but is something very different from it. It would, for example, be a possible part of the theory of direct colour apprehension to maintain that psychologically there is a mediation of stimuli between the

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, T. C. and E. C. Jack, London, p. 36.



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actual object and the perceiving subject such that the perception of the colour, indeed the colour itself, is the cumulative result of a relational process rather than the direct impinging upon experience of the property in strict "thereness." At the same time the projective reference of the quality as a quality of the object, given as its property, not as cumulative process result, may be maintained to be its epistemological significance. In other words, with a full recognition of the psychological process involved in its becoming experienced, it may still be maintained that (excepting for the analytic psychologist) what is given in the experience is not the process, but the wholeness of the immediate fact of colour, received by mediating process stimulation, but projected immediately in its "thereness" upon the object. And this would be true of all the predicates by which the object may be characterized. But though value apprehension in Professor Urban's ethical doctrine is not psychologically through feeling, it is in some way ultimately through feeling. This perhaps may be expressed by saying that were it not because mind is in some essential sense emotionally qualified, it would be impossible for it to experience value—either as in values, or as essence, or in values because primarily as essence.

In view of the whole tenor of Dr. Urban's work it is clear that the emotional apprehension of value is not, according to his doctrine, to be interpreted as ultimately upon the psychological level. It is stated in the *Fundamentals of Ethics*, for example,

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that the moral judgment is something essentially different from feeling: "But Kant's point—and it is a sound one—is that feeling is not the essential character of the moral judgment. Feeling is always personal in character, while reason is impersonal."<sup>1</sup> Even in the earlier work, *Valuation*, the axiological problem was distinguished from the psychological. "The second task of a theory of value," he writes, "is the reflective evaluation of objects of value. We not only *feel* the value of objects, but we evaluate these objects and ultimately the feelings of value themselves. Clearly another point of view than the psychological is here involved, a point of view which requires, not only to be clearly defined, but also to be properly related to the psychological."<sup>2</sup> For this broader study Dr. Urban proposes to adopt a distinctive term, Axiology. "On the analogy of the term epistemology we have constructed the term axiology, and may hereafter speak of the relation of the axiological to the psychological point of view."<sup>3</sup>

The *apprehension* of value is not therefore to be found on the psychological level. If this be the case, as appears also in the doctrine of Professor Hartmann, next to be referred to, the question

<sup>1</sup> *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> *Valuation*, p. 16. (The significance of this statement would seem to have been overlooked in a recent work in which Dr. Urban appears to be placed amongst the naturalistic moralists. The more recent of his writings remove any degree of uncertainty in this regard which statements of the earlier work may have left. Cf. H. Osborne, *Foundations of the Philosophy of Value*, Cambridge, 1933, p. 15.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

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recurs, would there not be less ambiguity and less opportunity for misinterpretation if valuation were regarded as a qualified form of rational apprehension rather than a qualified form of feeling? Logically, perhaps not, excepting for the fact that even philosophers are psychological beings and philosophical doctrine cannot wholly escape the tendency to turn upon psychological currents. But against this plea for rationalistic rather than emotional interpretation it may be argued with much force that the rationalistic tradition has set up its own currents so strongly that to interpret value-apprehension as rational is to commit it to a course even more dangerous to ethical theory than the feeling interpretation.

The more important consideration, however, is that of the actual nature and the "locus" of the apprehending in itself. As has been suggested, nothing in the view quoted from *Valuation* need set this locus upon the psychological side of the division between the psychological and the ideational orders. This is true also of the explicit characterization of ethical consciousness in terms of emotion which we find in the writing of Professor Hartmann.<sup>1</sup> "The apriorism of thinking and judging is accompanied by an apriorism of feeling, the intellectual a priori by an emotional a priori which is equally independent and original. The primal consciousness of value is a feeling of value, the primal recognition of a commandment is a feeling of that which unconditionally ought to be,

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. i, p. 177.

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the expression of which is the commandment." It is important to note that this passage is immediately followed by this other, which may evidently be interpreted as maintaining, what has already been indicated as holding true of the emotional apprehension doctrine of Professor Urban, that the feeling referred to is not of the psychological order, at least with reference to its origin. Professor Hartmann continues: "This priority of feeling has nothing to do with empiricism. The valuational hall-marks which it communicates to things and events are not derived from the things and events, not to mention the pleasure and pain which these induce. On the contrary, the marks are impressed by feeling upon the things and events." Not, be it noted, because having a certain feeling toward a thing constitutes it an ethical object but because: "Herein consist the aprioristic determination of these emotional acts and indirectly the apriority of the marks which the practical consciousness discerns in the real. The apriorism of emotional acts is just as 'pure,' original, autonomous, and 'transcendental' an authority as the logical and the categorical in the domain of theory."

The extent to which this emotional a priori stands aloof from merely psychological emotion is shown in the claim that: "The primary seat of the valuational a priori is the valuational feeling itself which pervades our interpretation of reality and our attitude toward life. Only in it is there any original, implicit "moral knowledge," any proper

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knowledge of good and evil.”<sup>1</sup> And further: “Even Kant’s moral law is in truth nothing else than the secondary logical form impressed upon such a value primarily felt and discerned through an emotional a priori (for example, the voice of conscience).”<sup>2</sup> And still again: “that which we call conscience is at bottom just this primal consciousness of value, which is found in the feeling of every person.”<sup>3</sup>

It might seem that the appeal for a more rationalistic term for the mode of value apprehension against authority such as that quoted would receive its *coup de grâce* if Kant could be enlisted in behalf of an emotional ethical a priori. There is an instructive passage in the *Metaphysic of Morals* which offers something close to this possibility.<sup>4</sup> Having written: “Now an action done from duty must wholly exclude the influence of inclination, and with it every object of the will, so that nothing remains which can determine the will except objectively the *law*, and subjectively *pure respect* for this practical law, and consequently the maxim that I should follow this law even to the thwarting of all my inclinations,” Kant adds in a foot-note an interpretation of the term “respect” which he has used:

It might be here objected to me that I take refuge behind the word *respect* in an obscure feeling, instead of giving a distinct solution of the question by a concept of

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. i, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 178-9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>4</sup> Abbott’s trans. *Kant’s Theory of Ethics*, p. 17.

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the reason. But although respect is a feeling, it is not a feeling *received* through influence, but is *self-wrought* by a rational concept, and, therefore, is specifically distinct from all feelings of the former kind, which may be referred either to inclination or fear. What I recognize immediately as a law for me I recognize with respect.

The rational character of moral apprehension is here brought out. One other consideration points to the intellectual character of valuation. Emotional responses to objects simply *are*, but there is no way in which their objective reference may be held to be true or false, whereas valuation has logical character by which it is true or false. In genuine valuation there is, therefore, in addition to any psychological conditions under which it occurs, the implicit entertaining of propositions which distinguishes value-consciousness from psychological emotional reaction. The importance of this distinction has already been discussed<sup>1</sup> and need only be mentioned here.

Something analogous to intellectual moral apprehension is found in æsthetic experience. There is an experience in which one may "enjoy" music, following it with emotional response quite appropriate to the intention of the composer. Something quite different occurs, however, when, with a kind of independence of its vehicle, a form is revealed which is recognized as the beauty of the selection. This may often be missed, while an emotional enjoyment quite worth having is experienced;

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter iv.

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but when it is experienced it brings a revealing insight into what was meant when composition was taking place. In addition to the unified experience of the successively given parts is this perception of beauty which carries the credential of sheer objectivity.

We may, then, conclude that if value apprehension is to be regarded as in some sense an emotional mode of apprehension it must be qualified as one in which feeling "is not *received* through influence, but is *self-wrought* by a rational concept," and is thus of the intelligible, not the psychological order.

So far our general frame of reference has included the physical and psychological orders and an ideational order. In each case there was a marginal area in which phenomena were capable of being described in terms of two different orders; but each had its distinctive character. It was also evident that as we passed from the physical to the psychological and to the ideational, there was an approach from that which was existentially aloof and objective to that which gained significance by being more closely associated with the personal inner experience of the subject, for whom experience has meaning.

A progressive polarity was exhibited between different orders, which becomes finally an epistemological polarity between the knower and the known, when the ideational order is identified with the experience of personal subjects making objective reference to an order of existents over

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against themselves. Some epistemological problems were considered as this became necessary to define terms and show their relation to ethical enquiry. Some were disregarded, thus rejecting the view that the general epistemological problem has to be solved before the problem of ethical knowledge may be attacked, in favour of the view that the phenomena of the moral life, and of valuation in general, may well present us with data which will throw light upon the more general epistemological problem.

The importance of the ideational order for any theory whatsoever is obvious from the fact that it is within this order that theory itself arises; though this may offer difficulties peculiar to this order in view of the fact that it is within it itself that any analysis of its own import must take place. For, consciously entertained ideas, which in being thought become existents of this order, are the constituents of knowing itself. These ideational existents have two characteristics: objective reference to an order other than themselves and logical relation to one another. This twofold character of members of the ideational order introduces an ontological distinction of the utmost importance. That the objective reference of members of the ideational order is a reference to existents is common ground amongst all thinkers excepting, possibly, those of extreme scepticism. The reality of existents of some kind to which the ideational order makes reference may be postulated. If ideas cannot be trusted this far in that which they



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profess to be, then "there's an end on't." But in studying the ideational order we saw that the relations between ideas and between judgments may be of a unique kind. In the ideational order there was seen to be that which is neither physical nor psychological, which is not timed, whose reality cannot be doubted any more than that of existents can, but which is not ultimately subject to explanations through reference to existents as the meaning of natural objects may be. Ideas occurring successively in states of consciousness have *meaning*, and are capable of logical relation to other ideas; but these meanings and relations are not natural events of a timed order. It is this order of meanings and logical relations which we shall now discuss as the Ideal, A Priori Order, in contrast to the Ideational.

### IV

#### *The Ideal, A Priori Order*

The principal purpose of the preceding sections of the present chapter has been to show that value cannot be defined by reference to characteristics of either the physical, psychological or ideational orders, and finally that there is another order of reference to which we may resort in endeavouring to account for the uniqueness of this concept.

It must be noted at the outset that the ideal order, to which we now turn, is not to be regarded as a "higher" order, standing as it were on a level next above the ideational as the ideational, with its

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mark of rationality, stands above the psychological which, again, stands above the physical. Existentially the physical is basal to the psychological and the psychological is basal to the ideational, but the ideational is not existentially basal to the ideal, a priori order. The psychological may "emerge" from the physical and the ideational from the psychological, in each case exhibiting a new characteristic indefinable in terms of the lower level. But the ideal does not "emerge" from the ideational order; it gives it its meanings. Existents with new unique meanings may emerge; their meanings do not emerge. They are wholly a priori; real in some sense, in order that they may be the meaning which experience has when it emerges with objective reference. This is an order of all possible meanings which existents may have for experience, and of all possible relations in which they may stand. The exploration of this realm reveals logical relations, formal principles and essences,—meanings and their relations apart from which the orders of reference into which we have been making enquiry would be unintelligible.

We have endeavoured to show that ethical terms cannot be defined in terms of the physical or psychological or ideational orders. It would also be inaccurate to say that they may be defined in terms of the ideal order, for this is the order of the meanings of all terms. When, therefore, it is said that certain ethical terms are indefinable in physical, psychological or ideational terms it is not necessary to their intelligibility to say that they are definable

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*in terms of* some higher orders; they may be, as we have held that some terms must be, and as modern writers to whose work reference has already been made have claimed they in fact are, quite ultimate and indefinable, essences. The ideal order is, therefore, not an order of meaning superimposed upon lower orders, but *an order of meanings actualized in other orders of reality*.

Reference to essence or to an order of meanings or ideas which are by apriority independent of existence, is sometimes felt to be reference to a mysterious realm by its very nature hovering ethereally above reality. It is exactly the opposite. It is merely the claim that reality has meaning which makes it intelligible for thought. Nor is it reference to a static order of essences by conformity to which reality is in some way congealed into meaning. If reality is not static then any judgment which affirms that it is, predicates of it the wrong meaning. Again, there are certain combinations of meanings which reality cannot have in spite of all their essentiality; meanings cannot contradict each other and be affirmed of the same things. Were this not so, these things would have become unintelligible, that is, without meaning. And again, certain meanings cannot truly be attributed to reality, however intelligible they may be in themselves; reality cannot verify them. They refer to the non-actual. But other meanings may be attributed to reality; long processes of inference may be based upon their predication; and after conclusions with hypothetical objective references

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have been reached, these objective references may be verified by individual and group experience as being the meanings which reality in its actuality has for rational beings.<sup>1</sup>

It has been maintained that value has a unique place amongst other meanings by which the actual may be characterized. This claim must not be made a carry-all for unsolved problems. Nor must we fall under the danger of over-simplifying the problem by disregarding its most difficult elements. On the other hand we must not be led to regard value as uniquely favoured in being ascribed a priori status. There is an analogy which may prove suggestive, and will show that in attributing this ideal status to value while also maintaining that this does not necessarily detach it from actuality, we are claiming nothing for it which may not be done in the society of respectable sciences. The analogy is that of number.

If a cup be accidentally broken, number, without in any sense determining the exact number of pieces into which it will break, is, nevertheless, an absolute a priori system under which the number of parts must inevitably fall. Number anticipates all possible events and is actualized in all events. Events do not confer reality upon it; they necessarily conform to it. Number *may*, however, be used in the predetermination of events. Under free agency—which it will here be assumed without proof belongs to persons—a future event may be determined not only within an indefinite

<sup>1</sup> For concluding consideration of this point cf. Chapter vii.

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number of possibilities, but in conformity with a specifically selected possibility. For example, a person may decide to break a cup into two pieces and devise a means of doing it. An a priori system of number is in this case referred to prior to the event, and the event is brought about in accord with this prior selection. But to whatever extent an agent is free to determine a result, he is absolutely bound to produce a result which has number. The essential nature of number as a priori is not altered by being thus related to the actual either in anticipation of an event or in its actualization. Nor is the exact number, of china pieces for example, determined by the fact that when the event occurs there must be some exact number of parts which falls within the absolute a priori system of number. We should particularly note, therefore, that an absolute a priori frame of possibilities into which all events must fall, does not in and of itself determine what particular possibility will be realized by any given event. The absoluteness of an order of reference does not imply some absolute monistic system of ontological determinations within which free personal agency would be in the last analysis illusory. There are two different kinds of absoluteness here which must not be confused the one with the other.

The case is similar with value. In value as an indefinable notion which implies by its very nature a scale of higher and lower, there is an ethical a priori which is as absolute as the number a priori

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and need be no more detached from the actual than number is. And here again it is important to note that the doctrine of an ethical ideal absolutism does not imply a metaphysical absolute idealism as one of the prolegomena to Ethics.

We shall reserve enquiry into the further implications of the value a priori for the following chapter; but before passing to this we may take note of an ethical idea which, even more evidently than that of value, eludes analysis by reference to the orders of reference which have been discussed. This is the notion "ought to be," which differs so essentially from "is" as to suggest that there is not only a difference of an essential kind in the nature of that which is attributed when a natural term is predicated and that which is attributed when an ethical term is predicated, but also a difference in the mode of predication itself. As Professor Laird has pointed out, there is a distinction between reasons that are simply explanatory and reasons that justify or condemn.<sup>1</sup> Human conduct is "explained" *both* by reasons that are simply explanatory and by reasons that justify or condemn. In any attempt to explain human conduct, reference has to be made to a natural order, simply explanatory, and to another order, *justifying*. Ethics inherits the problem of the impinging upon the "explained" order of "justifying" reasons by which conduct may also be determined; the problem of the relation of principles and value to things valued, to goods. While the proposition

<sup>1</sup> *A Study in Moral Theory*, p. 12.

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that value determines values, existent goods, may rank as a merely verbal proposition, how that which is a priori should be the ground of objectivity for the determination of the existence of goods presents a problem for investigation. That value must in some way infuse existents seems a necessary assumption if moral worth is to be assigned to conduct in any way which makes a difference to what we do. Men work and live, and on occasion die, for causes; but not for a priori essences. And still, as we have already seen, their work is "justified" only by some essential characteristic of the real which lies beyond merely explained existence. Reference is made to this fact whenever that which *is* is viewed in the light of what *ought to be*.

The distinction between what "is" and what "ought to be" is, of course, made familiar by most text-books in Ethics; but when examples of fundamental ethical propositions are given in the forms "X is good" and "X ought to be" the distinction must be pointed out that in the one case the uniqueness of ethical propositions appears to lie in the uniqueness of the term predicated, whereas in the other case it appears to lie in the mode of predication. That ethical propositions may be distinguished from those of other sciences by reference to the terms predicated has, indeed, been the contention of the fourth chapter of this study. This predicative form is valid; but it should be noted that when, from an assertion of value by a proposition of the attributive type, we pass by inference to one in the form "X ought to be" we

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have not merely equated "value" and "ought to be," but we have passed to a new assertive mode. "Value" is a unique predicate; "ought to be" is a unique mode of predication. The implication of this distinction will be considered more fully in the closing chapter.

In bringing this chapter to a close we may summarize its results briefly as follows:

Arguments have been offered to support the contention that the basic notion of Ethics, namely that of value, cannot be defined in the terms of any known existential order and must, therefore, be a term of unique import having its meaning amongst those ultimate essences by which reality may be characterized; an ultimate distinction in meaning which is incapable of further simplification. We have also seen that the apriority of a notion does not necessarily detach it from application to the actual. The discussion of the relation of the a priori to the actual was, however, not followed to any conclusion. To an enquiry into this relation the concluding section will be devoted.



*SECTION III*

EXTENSIONAL REFERENCE IN  
ETHICS



## CHAPTER VI

### *The Formal A Priori and the A Priori of Content*

THE course of the argument up to this point has led to two main conclusions. It was maintained, in the first place, that through the consciousness of obligation under which all values may place a moral agent, the problem of the objectivity of values in general becomes immediately related to that of ethical objectivity. Then, after pointing out that the first main aspect of the problem of ethical objectivity lies in the intensional import of ethical terms and propositions, different interpretations of that import were examined and the conclusion was reached that we must refer to an ideal or a priori order to explain the unique import of ethical predication.

We must now turn to the second main aspect of our problem. Having concluded that value is a unique a priori concept whose meaning cannot be derived from the meaning of objects of the natural or of the ideational orders we meet at the outset the question; in what sense is it related to the facts of these orders, to physical objects, psychological states, moral agents and conduct to which we attribute value? For it is not impossible that it should be admitted that value is a unique a priori concept, while it is also claimed that it is incapable

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of being referred to the actual because the actual is incapable of being ideal.

It is against the severance of an ideal order of principles or essences from the actual that the argument is now to be directed. In the present chapter the attempt will be made to show that not only formal principle but also value content must have a priori character to give true normative validity to ethical principles.

When the relevance of "rationality" to the definition of ethical terms was being discussed the twofold aspect of thought was considered; it was seen to be a process with objective reference which gives it content, and with inner consistency which gives it coherence. Both of these factors enter into what experience must be if it is to be known to be valid. This fact, which forms the basis of common practice both in everyday living and in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, may be stated as the need for both formal and material conditions to give experience dependable validity; that is, validity for conduct. This is most obviously true in the case of a science which in a unique sense is concerned with conduct as it is brought under principles in an order of objective fact which is under natural law.

We shall first consider the importance of formal moral principle as this is exemplified in the doctrine of Kant; then present the proposal for an extension of the ethical a priori beyond the formal to the material a priori of content, as this is made by Professor Hartmann.

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The significance of conduct for Ethics lies not only in its effectiveness as agency, but in its relation to the moral character of an agent;<sup>1</sup> and this requires reference to some principle by which conduct may be directed, not merely some antecedent by which it can be explained. Conduct which is to become effective in the natural order must also be determined by a principle which is independent of natural facts and events. The independence of this principle is the basic claim in Kantian ethical doctrine. With Kant's declaration at the outset of the *Metaphysic of Morals* that "Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even outside it, which can be called good without qualification, except a Good Will" the ultimate ground and end of morality is placed outside the phenomenal series. It belongs to that order of which, along with the self and freedom, we may have complete practical certainty without ever having it as an object of "knowledge." Naming qualities which are frequently regarded as good in themselves Kant points out that they may, nevertheless, be highly pernicious unless directed by an intrinsically good will. But, it may be asked, why pernicious? Evidently because they may lead to some other state which is not good. Still, the will is good irrespective of the consequences which flow from it. We meet thus early in Kant's doctrine a difficulty which seems to lie in the fact that, not having included valuation or ought-to-be among the forms of judgment, Kant has no way of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter ii.

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accounting for our judgment that certain characteristics of things and persons as we find them in our world of experience are unqualifiedly good. Therefore, they are not really good in a final sense, and the unconditional good must belong to a transcendental order. But it is not clear why no quality of a natural object may be good because we cannot be sure of its consequences, while the will may be good even though we cannot be sure of its consequences.

The cleft in Kantian doctrine, to which reference has already been made in Chapter II, appears in three distinctions which Kant introduces into his ethical theory: (1) that between motive and result; (2) that between duty and inclination; and (3) that between categorical and hypothetical imperatives.

(1) The contrast between motive and result, subjective and objective goodness, is often drawn. While Kant could claim that he is really laying the true basis of objective validity for the moral judgment by finding its principle in the moral or rational nature of the subject, his doctrine in fact becomes an exclusive one with its final moral emphasis upon the subjective factor in conduct. A man's will is good because it wills the good, and it requires no justification by the consequences which flow from it. And further, it itself is really the good which is willed. Its goodness may well be wholly unconditioned by any reference to results, for itself is the highest good and "the condition of all other good." This agrees with the

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common judgment that if a man does what he genuinely believes to be right he is a good man in some sense which absolves him from the charge of wickedness, even though he may not be a good citizen, or a good father, or a good day-labourer, or any other kind of good person who is good for anything. But it does not agree with the implication of common ethical judgments that while an individual acts rightly in doing what he believes to be right, he must not believe his act to be right excepting on other grounds than his belief that it is right for him to do what he believes to be right. Whatever allowance must be made for the individual in doing what is right from his point of view, his act can never be judged even by the agent to have its rightness relative to his point of view. Hence, what Kant has done has been to isolate one factor of immense importance in the moral situation and exalt it, for reasons resting upon his philosophy of nature, to the position of exclusive importance. But because other goods may be worthless or harmful unless combined with the good will, Mr. Broad points out, does not prove that the good will is the only unconditionally good thing, but only that it is a necessary constituent of an intrinsically good whole.<sup>1</sup> As has been indicated, this tendency to isolate personal factors for separate judgment is common practice. Credit is given to "good intention" in assessing what a man or race is in moral nature. But on the other hand the view is also commonly held, that in spite of good inten-

<sup>1</sup> *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, p. 117.

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tions, something may be radically immoral in the nature of a man or his civilization. Even if we assume that a man is thoroughly conscientious in willing a certain act, so that we credit him with moral goodness in that sense, we would certainly imply, and in many cases directly pass, a judgment upon his morality in terms of *what* he wills. Through a wide range we feel that there should be leniency; but when it comes to head-hunters, followers of licentious ritualistic practices and certain forms of capitalism, we attribute to the conscientious the low morality which corresponds to their practices; as also we judge many slave-owners to have been conscientious but *morally* unenlightened.

We should note also that Kantian goodness of will must be distinguished from what is referred to as good intentions when we say of a man that his intentions were good but his feelings got the better of his judgment. The man of good will actually wills the good, or, perhaps more accurately, wills to will the good, and in so doing rises above the influence of impulse. He is the man who acts on principle and upon whom one can count for consistency, once it is known what principle he acts upon. One can also know that he believes that principle to be right. But even when this is said about the kind of character which we call good in another, no help is given toward forming specific moral judgments when the question is faced, "what should I now do in this circumstance?" Evidently one should do right. One is not, however,



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helped to decide what to do by simply maintaining that moral agents are good when they do what they believe to be right.

(2) A somewhat negative help is introduced in Kant's second distinction,—that between duty and inclination. To have moral quality action must be done not merely in accordance with duty but because of duty. While not determining what one's duty is in a particular case this does require that we pass judgment upon our impulses and inclinations and then act upon the result of that judgment. In the case of action under impulse a purely empirical psychology could account for the action as resulting from natural influences. It is when what is morally good ceases to be naturally desirable that the true moral worth of an action is most clearly revealed. It is without moral worth if its natural desirableness be the whole account of why it was willed. This raises morality above individual psychological considerations, and thus while for Kant final emphasis is upon the subjective factor in conduct, the principle of conduct is not subjective in any sense that would make it relative to the eccentricities of the individual. As the objective validity of natural law rests upon the nature of reason itself, so morality rests upon the nature of man as rational, not of man as a creature whose nature can form the subject-matter of psychology or a social science. Just as truly as reason brings experience into order by the forms of its judgments, so does reason require conduct to be directed by a formal principle which it lies

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in reason itself to formulate. Thus we are led to the formulation of a moral imperative. The character of that imperative we may indicate briefly.

(3) In the world of everyday experience we can trust to natural law that if certain ends are desired certain means must be used. The results may be of our own choosing and rules to obtain them are purely hypothetical imperatives; in effect, they are counsels based upon the supposition that he who wills an end wills also the means to that end. But the case is different with morality. It gives no advice but issues inflexible orders. The reason for obeying moral law is like the reason for thinking experience in terms of cause and effect, because otherwise we deny our own natures as rational beings. The formulation of the moral law is wholly non-empirical in its nature; it is in no sense a generalization of existing imperatives. The moral imperative has not arisen as a product of experience; it must be wholly a priori, with that universality and objective validity which any principle of reason, and only a principle of reason, can have. This validity is assured by the formula of the Categorical Imperative which includes the conception of universal law in its demand: "Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law."

Such an imperative is, of course, as empty as the causal category until it is applied in the determination of experience. In its nature as a pure form it must be at once entirely independent of any

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special experience and capable of application to all experience. But it cannot be the result of experience excepting in the sense that it becomes a consciously recognized imperative when actual experience calls for its application.

The extreme formalism of the Categorical Imperative has naturally subjected it to general criticism. It has been claimed that divorcement between the good will and what are regarded as the ordinary "human goods" makes it impossible to form a concrete moral judgment upon which a human being could direct moral action. The pure principle of consistency requires something with which to be consistent. "Any conduct can be universalized provided one does not care what happens," Dr. A. K. Rogers has pointed out, and he maintains that the Categorical Imperative "fails to work if we are really consistent in presupposing no distinction whatever of good and bad prior to its application. What really it does is, not to supply the content of the good, but to deny the *privacy* of the good when this already is recognized."<sup>1</sup> This failure to relate the morality of conduct to the conditions of actual life has also been shown by Canon Rashdall in contending that Kant fails to distinguish two senses of "categorical," the one admitting no merely subjective grounds for an exception to a general rule, and the other admitting no recognition of the particular circumstances which determine the act. Kant "confuses the inclusion of an exception *in* a moral rule with

<sup>1</sup> *Theory of Ethics*, p. 66.

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the admission of an exception *to* a moral rule.”<sup>1</sup> It has also been pointed out that the Categorical Imperative is logically inconsistent with certain intuitively accepted practices of the moral life and would allow some modes of life almost universally regarded as immoral. “For the ruthless pursuit of power is quite compatible with the maxim, provided you do not complain when beaten, while the mode of life of St. Francis of Assisi is not.”<sup>2</sup>

But against the interpretation of Kant as advocating extreme formalism it has been suggested that he did not mean that the purely rational will should face the problem of conduct with complete indifference except as to consistency, but with some inherent impulses of reason which are characteristic human qualities. It is not impossible that man as rational may have been conceived by Kant as having inherent characteristics which cannot be observed psychologically, for in an earlier reference we have noted a passage in which Kant speaks of respect as a feeling self-wrought by reason, distinct from all feelings which may be referred to inclination or fear. There is a possible determination of content by this inherent nature. Kant also specifically formulated the imperative to clearly show that in other persons there is an absolute value which makes it possible to give it content as the demand to “So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never

<sup>1</sup> *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. i, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Whittaker, *Theory of Abstract Ethics*, p. 59.

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as means only." But in these references there is no evident basis upon which we may pass beyond the exclusive view of the relation between the moral values and those which have their existence and character in the natural order. If, however, there be no essential goods other than the moral will the difficulty arises of explaining how the moral judgment ever got its start. Once something actual could be pronounced good there would be a foothold in a realm of values with which to be consistent. The practical value of Kant's formal imperative would then become apparent: if there be concrete goods then they should be in the open market. Not every one may place the same values on the same goods, but when one does value what is also a good to others he has no right to special privilege. The nature of concrete goods might be largely relative to individuals, but the principle of conduct would be an absolute rule, that we must be consistent with that which we would be willing to have made universal as the basis of the social order. Otherwise, in so far as we rule for ourselves privileges denied to others we rule contradictory principles for the social order.

While the criticisms of Kantian formalism are no doubt largely justified by the words of Kant himself it is hard to avoid the impression that for Kant the Categorical Imperative stands related to the principle that there is something in the world of fact which it is right to do, unconditionally, in every circumstance; and surely such an imperative may be given this application to moral conduct.

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While it is true that the good will has value in itself, and not merely because the right is more likely to be done when good will has its doing in charge, conscience does not counsel us in terms of the reflective observation that it is the motive that matters. However true it may be that it is right to do what one thinks to be right, conscience never tells us that the right is simply what we think to be right. It speaks in terms of the obligation to find out in the concrete case what *is* right. With this the Kantian doctrine is quite compatible, and its practical applicability may be seen in its correspondence to principles of common-sense morality. In the first place, the highest value is in persons of good will; they are the salt of the earth, and they are the kingdom of heaven. And, in the second place, the Kantian doctrine has another practical counterpart in the code of common sense. It applies alike to those who, with seemingly over-conscientious devotion to some one cause, reach the level of mere fanaticism—inability to see values in their true proportions—and to those who, without regard for any recognized moral principle, indulge in anti-social practices. In both cases common sense asks, “what kind of a world would it be if every one acted like that?” Even the child knows what this question implies as a practical demand for moral conduct.

It is not, then, against the formalism of the Kantian principle that objection is to be raised but against the assumption that there is some final severance between the realm of the agent's

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moral value and the realm of values within which his agency must take place. And further, it is to be recognized that consistency with principle on the part of the moral agent is not incompatible with the recognition of every change of circumstance as in some way altering what the particular duty is which it rests upon the agent to perform. Every significant circumstance becomes a demand upon the agent for a particular judgment. We do, as a matter of fact, try to simplify moral rules and to exclude exceptions. On the whole it is simpler that a lie should be a lie, outright and wrong, than something which by qualification may be right. It is hard to know just who could be trusted to make exceptions on valid moral grounds. But on the other hand, could the integrity of the person making the exception be assured, he would be just as trustworthy as another, who was insensitive to the distinctions under which possible exceptions might be recognized. There would be more involved in knowing the nature of his reliability, but one thing would be certain, the exception would never be for purely personal gratification. If the Categorical Imperative be maintained in its purely formal character and at the same time it be recognized that the values involved in two circumstances are never exactly the same, the imperative would require us to recognize circumstances and act in the particular case with all its conditions so that we could will that any rational being should so act under exactly the same circumstances. Moral agency under these condi-

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tions is seen to be a thing of extreme complexity—as surely it is. But in being subject to particular conditions it does not, in fact, lose its general amenability to established principles covering great classes of cases. The high sanctions inherent in the value of truth, of personal life and of social welfare will not be lost. They will exercise their authority under the Categorical Imperative; but it will also be possible for that Imperative to be appealed to in the marginal cases which do not lend themselves to ready classification, but because of this very fact are the most difficult problems of Applied Ethics. It would seem clear that what is needed to supplement the Kantian doctrine is an *a priori* of content with an authority comparable to that of its inexorable formal principle.

The difficulty of conceiving goods-value as categorical lies with Kant in that far-reaching distinction which is drawn between the natural and the rational origin of the principle of conduct. The analysis and constructive criticism of Hartmann on this point is instructive. For Kant, he maintains,

there exist only two possibilities: either the principle issues from the external world, from things, from nature, or it emanates from reason. In the former case it is “empirical”; it lacks universality and independence (autonomy) in contrast to the categories and the laws of nature, and it is besides merely a “hypothetical imperative,” not a commandment proper which could be set up in opposition to natural tendencies. But, if it emanates from reason, it is universal, *a priori*, an unconditional “categorical” imperative—that is, a genuine commandment



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standing over against all natural laws, independent, autonomous, indeed superior.<sup>1</sup>

Accepting this basis of distinction without qualification, Professor Hartmann proceeds to claim that it applies with equal validity to the manifold of values. "These two possibilities fundamentally apply to every value. In every one the alternative between empirical relativism and transcendental a priorism returns again. The Kantian problem therefore sets us in the midst of the fundamental question as to the essence of values. . . ."

The crucial issue in the argument, Professor Hartmann points out, is the validity of the Kantian disjunction. When this disjunction is applied to the problem of value it appears in the question: "Can a value only be either abstracted from things (natural tendencies) or dictated by a volitional subject?"<sup>2</sup> He maintains that a further alternative offers itself. "The concept of the aprioristic does not coincide with that of origin in reason."<sup>2</sup> No subjective tendency adhering to such origin need attach to an ethical a priori, for, much as geometric relation is objective, and as the causal relation is objective, while neither is empirically derived, so also of the ethical categorical it may be claimed that the impossibility of deriving it from the data of experience is no evidence that it lacks objective validity apart from those formal principles which have their objectivity in their pure rationality. In the realm of ethics "the universality, the apriority

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. i, pp. 160-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

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and the categorical character of the principle have no need of a subjective origin—even though. . . . in the constitution of practical reason itself. Its only need is an origin which is not to be found in naturalistic objectivity. . . . From this sphere ethical consciousness must not derive its principle. . . . The moral consciousness must meet the sensible world with another principle.”<sup>1</sup> In addition to the alternatives offered by Kant there is, therefore, the third possibility, namely, that the ethical ultimate is neither naturalistic nor dictated by even the rational subject, but is a material a priori of content.

This conception of a “materially determined will” is not, according to Hartmann, based upon any necessary reference to naturalistic determination. It has been a mistake to confuse the opposition between the formal and the material with an opposition between the a priori and the material; for the material may be a priori. “If by the aprioristic we do not understand a function, but only the specific way of knowing something objective which, as such, can be as well understood as mistaken, there is no sort of difficulty in regard to the material content of values.”<sup>2</sup> That the sense of value is held by Hartmann to be emotional has already been noted and commented upon<sup>3</sup> and calls for no further discussion excepting to note that as emotional in its character, valuation must not be regarded as a psychological reaction in

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. i, p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. pp. 187–9.

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terms of which value may be defined. For it is a feeling for values which have objective reality and therefore validate the feeling.

Claiming that the valuational feeling “has nothing to do with empiricism”—meaning, presumably, that it is not merely psychological—Hartmann continues:

The valuational hall-marks which it communicates to things and events are not derived from the things and events, not to mention the pleasure and pain which these induce. On the contrary, the marks are impressed by feeling upon the things and events. Herein consist the aprioristic determination of these emotional acts and indirectly the apriority of the marks which the practical consciousness discerns in the real. The apriorism of emotional acts is just as “pure,” original, autonomous and “transcendental” an authority as the logical and categorical apriorism in the domain of theory.<sup>1</sup>

Out of their context, the references in this passage to marks which feeling “communicates to things and events” and which are “impressed by feeling upon the things and events” would lend themselves to subjective interpretations wholly contrary to the meaning of their author. The whole purport of the argument is in opposition to the subjective determination of value and to its naturalistic derivation. Far from being a natural property of objects, the complete independence of the character of value from any naturalistic meaning is emphasized through the suggestion that, as in the realm of theory thought uses necessary

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. i, pp. 177-8.

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interpreting concepts which cannot be derived from experience but are nevertheless applicable to experience, so in the realm of valuation there is applied an emotional interpretive a priori of value which has no less authority and validity than a logical and categorical a priori. While, therefore, the valuational marks are "impressed by feeling upon the things and events," the values are not constituted by these feelings but rather are they discerned by them because the moral consciousness—which is the consciousness of the same person who perceives an objective world in its natural properties—bears reference to ultimate essential meanings which are to be discerned in reality through valuations of reality, just as truly as are the natural essential meanings of objects to be discerned through intelligent cognition. That is, there is an ideal order of essential meanings to which thought and valuation bear reference as an a priori order. This is at times spoken of by Hartmann as though it were a wholly transcendent realm: "Valuation structures are ideal objects, beyond all real Being and Non-Being, also beyond the really existing feeling of value, which alone grasps them." But offsetting this abstractness he writes:

that they are something which as regards content are material and are not empty, abstract forms, makes them capable by their nature of being actualized—in so far as they are not actualized. Consequently, on account of their concrete nature they are capable of determining the content of laws which have a bearing upon positive moral life. For only positive contents are capable of being

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commanded and actualized, but empty forms and abstractions never.<sup>1</sup>

Thus while Hartmann not infrequently appears to suggest that the valuator stands related to an ethereal realm of essences which "floats, as it were, in the air" rather than an order of existing reality in which he finds value actualized, it is probably nearer his meaning to hold that there is no reason why a "good" in which value is actualized, should not have its place in an a priori scale of values just as specifically as a china cup when it breaks has the number of its pieces in the number series. If there be an a priori series in which every number must have its specific place, there need be nothing uniquely ethereal about a value apriority by which every actualized value has its specific place. We can never face a demand for moral action believing it to be a matter of indifference what we do. But if it really matters which of alternative possibilities is realized it must matter because there is, a priori, a difference in value levels of those results which are alternatively possible. Thus moral consciousness reveals a wholly a priori factor and a concrete reference to fact in every ethical situation. We shall endeavour in the next chapter to analyse further the relation between these two factors.

Partially in elucidation of the argument of this chapter, and in anticipation of the next we may turn to our present purposes an illustration used by William James in another connection. The moral situation may be conceived as a game of

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. i, p. 180.

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chess whose principles are so formally determined that whatever move his opponent may make the expert knows exactly both what that move ought to have been and what his own move ought to be. His inexpert opponent may introduce chaos into the game so that the expert does not know what will happen next. But whatever happens he knows exactly what ought to be done in view of what has happened. At each stage of the game some move is that which ought to be made, and this depends upon the facts as they are. The one thing which the rules of the game preclude is that the board should be swept clean and an entirely new beginning be made. So in the realm of values. What "ought to be done" is always determined by the impinging upon the moral situation of an a priori "ought to be", never merely a regretful "ought to have been." We may learn from the past, but moral conduct is never isolated from facts as they are and the a priori "ought to be" is forward looking toward the next move, controlling what ought to be done through the insight of a moral agent who knows a priori the obligation under which value places him but must learn actual values through the experiences of life. In doing so he remains part of the process in which results of his own conduct will take place, and as a factor in this process he may to some extent retrieve errors by further control of events. This capacity is part of his intelligence, and the will to face results, recognizing the further obligations under which they place him, is part of his moral character.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The Ideal and the Characterization of the Actual*

IT is the purpose of the present chapter to consider the problem presented by the contrast and frequent opposition between what is given as constituting a realm of actual ethical fact and what has been shown in the preceding chapter to be given as a realm "beyond all real Being and Non-Being," to which, nevertheless, constant reference is made in moral experience.

Ethical propositions may be expressed with validity in either of two modes. There may be valuation of the actual expressed assertively in either affirmative or negative predication, and there may be affirmation or denial of the authority of any given value to demand realization, in terms of what ought to be. To these we may refer as the *characterizing* and the *imperative* modes of ethical predication. This distinction was referred to when, toward the close of the fifth chapter, it was held that "in the one case the uniqueness of ethical propositions appears to lie in the uniqueness of the term predicated, whereas in the other case it appears to lie in the mode of predication." So far as the existence of a science of Ethics is concerned it may be maintained that, although a science must investigate characterizations, such a science as Ethics would never have arisen at all were the

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characterizing form of ethical predication capable of giving a complete expression of value consciousness.<sup>1</sup> In this case it would have been possible for the valuator to perform judgments of pure valuation without any of the constraints under which consciousness of value places him, and hence no moral situation would have arisen—excepting as the value of truth exercises constraint over him as a valuator (an important and suggestive exception). But in fact no such abstract appraisal of actual objects and situations is possible. Every apprehended value is at the same time a claim to authority as a motive of conduct. Every comparison in valuation is a balancing of imperatives.

This fact is not due to an accidental relation of the consciousness of obligation to personality. Obligation does not arise because of man's unique place in the order of reality; rather, it constitutes man's metaphysical status. Beyond the implications of that status we cannot penetrate. What is implied in it we cannot significantly deny. This is true of man's rationality and of his moral consciousness, essential qualities of personality. As rational experience arises with objective reference and inner coherence, the assumption must be made that amongst whatever ultimate possibilities there may have been, the realization of this possibility has made reality intelligible.<sup>2</sup> It was argued in an earlier chapter that "It is no less part of the rationality of thought to be valid for experience and conduct through its objective

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the argument of Chapter ii.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Chapter v.



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reference than to be valid for purely formal conclusions reached through inference,"<sup>1</sup> and again it was maintained that cognition "marks the utmost form of relationality for thought as it embraces both subject-consciousness and object-consciousness in one experience."<sup>2</sup> If this be true the relation of the knower within the whole unity or plurality of the real cannot be an accidental relation for knowledge, and whatever is yielded in an analysis of the uniqueness of that relation as its necessary implication must be regarded as inherent in reality itself. This is also true of the implications of moral consciousness. What is involved in that consciousness becomes highly significant, therefore, for every theory of ethical reality.

The course of the whole argument up to this point has been directed toward showing that there is more involved in valuation as cognitive than can be accounted for by naturalistic ethics. That this is the case also with the consciousness of obligation is shown in three ways. An "ought," upon which consciousness of moral obligation rests, implies the notion of value, and therefore as value is non-naturalistic so likewise is obligation. Again, the distinctive reference in obligation, namely, to an "ought to be," is in its nature incapable of being brought under a conception of that which "is." And, in the third place, it may be shown that the most plausible explanations of the phenomenon of obligation-consciousness as a natural resultant fail adequately to explain its import. Arguments of

<sup>1</sup> Chapter i.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter iii.

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this latter character have been used in the fifth chapter and no further resort need be made to them. They all rest finally upon an appeal to the *intuition* of meaning against the psychological account of the *occurrence of experience*.

The issue which confronts us at this point is that of the mode of the characterization of reality through which its ethical meaning is validated. That reality has ethical meaning is not here in question. That this meaning may be defined in terms of subjectivism or naturalism has been contended against throughout the whole course of this discussion. But even so, in what way or sense does reality validate this meaning?

The first view which we shall consider offers perhaps the most simple and direct answer. The valuational meaning of reality is validated much as any other meaning is, by the objective presentation of properties which are the objective references of those very meanings. We truly attribute properties to objects when they in fact have them. Similarly we truly attribute values to objects when they in fact have them. And as properties have their way of asserting their actuality against imaginative projections of meanings which the objects cannot verify, so also in the case of value. It may, therefore, be contended that value is a *property* of objects by which they become goods. This is the view maintained by Dr. Moore in *Principia Ethica*. He there advances the proposition that "good," used in the sense of value broadly conceived, is a property. Ethics, he main-

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tains, "investigates assertions about that property of things which is denoted by the term 'good,' and the converse property denoted by the term 'bad.'" <sup>1</sup> Good is not the only ultimate term, for yellow<sup>2</sup> and possibly pleasure<sup>3</sup> are similarly indefinable. In these terms we have reached ultimate terms of reference. This does not mean that these latter properties are ultimate in the sense that nothing can account for their existence, but that they are ultimate in the sense that no analysis can elucidate their meanings. But in this last contrast, between *accounting for the existence* of a property and the *definition of its meaning*, we reach a crucial distinction between the nature of good as an ethical property and all others which may be referred to as natural properties. This distinction is of the greatest importance. And it is also important to keep in mind the fact that the comparison does not involve, for Moore, a necessarily transcendental object of valuation. "For I do not deny," he writes, "that good is a property of certain natural objects."<sup>4</sup> The distinction is not then primarily one as to the realm of existence to which the objects of value belong but as to the nature of the property which belongs to them. This property is not a natural property, though it may be a property of natural objects.

The distinction between natural properties and ethical properties may be definitely made by reference to their existence in time. The following

<sup>1</sup> *Principia Ethica*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

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quotation<sup>1</sup> will make clear the character of the argument:

Can we imagine 'good' as existing *by itself* in time, and not merely as a property of some natural object? For myself, I cannot so imagine it, whereas with the greater number of properties of objects—those which I call the natural properties—their existence does seem to me to be independent of the existence of those objects. They are, in fact, rather parts of which the object is made up than mere predicates which attach to it. If they were all taken away, no object would be left, not even bare a substance: for they are in themselves substantial and give to the object all the substance that it has. But this is not so with good.

That a natural property should exist "*by itself* in time" remains dark doctrine. There is, however, a sense in which a natural property comes into existence under causal conditions in the temporal series with the coming into existence of an object with that property. But this would be true with regard to the ethical properties which natural objects exhibit when good is a property of them. When, for example, an object is good or beautiful or when a judgment as a psychological event is true, a natural account may be given of the existence of the object or judgment without evaluating it in its beauty or goodness or truth, while still its value depends upon every constituent part which is essential to its nature. Here confusion must be avoided between the emergence of a new characteristic over and upon all the other properties of an

<sup>1</sup> *Principia Ethica*, p. 41.

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object and, on the other hand, the description of that new meaning merely by reference to the other properties upon the existence of which its value rests. Consider, for example, the beauty of an etching which may "emerge" over and upon a complex of details by the addition of a few finally significant lines. These actualize beauty by a process which may be adequately described without conveying the slightest conception of the character of the work as a value. Compare the attributing of yellow to an object. When this colour is experienced for the first time the uniqueness of the experience may be realized and then as a descriptive quality be identified in future experience, or referred to in intercourse with others who have had similar experience. But when something is experienced as good or beautiful, or a judgment is accepted as true, what is attributed is not a *descriptive meaning* but a *normative meaning*. This implies that when a value is apprehended it is because there is a normative a priori of value to which it is referred in being known as a value.

It may further be maintained that value cannot be a property in the sense in which natural qualities are properties because it not only implies reference to a norm rather than a descriptive essence, but it also may be a property of objects which are not natural objects, such as persons and personal character, states, and relations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this case a problem will arise which has already been referred to in the second chapter. Must a distinction be made in the kinds of value when value is a property of natural objects

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In any case it would be quite untrue to the view of Moore to hold that our knowledge of the property "good" is reached by abstraction from the class of objects which are goods. It is not by an inductive process that we analyse out of a great class of goods their distinguishing characteristic and thus form a general concept good, as we might analyse out of a great class of situations the fact that objects were objects of interest, but the existence of a class of objects to which good has been attributed is due to a special selection of objects under an a priori concept. Values cannot reach us through perceptual stimulus as natural properties can; they must be apprehended under a priori conceptual conditions. While this follows directly from Dr. Moore's doctrine it is given fuller development by Professor Hartmann. He holds that "our philosophical survey does not take its ideal objects from ethical phenomena given in the realm of fact, but, after turning attention to facts, it beholds its objects immediately and independently of facts."<sup>1</sup> That this must not be taken to indicate that for Professor Hartmann the valuator's "exposure" is toward an ideal order

and when it is a property of non-natural objects? If it be a property which constitutes objects "goods" existing in time it may be held that it must be essentially different from that value which constitutes personal objects "moral values." In this case natural objects have the property goods-value, and non-natural objects have the property moral-value, this being not only a difference in degree but an essential difference. Then the Restrictive View of the relation of Ethics to Axiology would be the true view.

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. i, p. 107.

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unrelated to the actual, the following quotations will serve to prove: "The a priori element of worth contained implicitly in living morality belongs therefore in fact. . . . to the given phenomenon, to the situational complex, to the 'factum' of ethical reality."<sup>1</sup> Again, "valuational consciousness is necessarily a material and objective consciousness."<sup>2</sup> And, "We can scarcely succeed in understanding the essence of values in its universality, before we have turned our attention to single values and have encountered their fundamental outlines in greater concreteness and vividness."<sup>3</sup>

It is not infrequently argued against the property view of value that the common divergencies in valuations are evidence that there is no objective property in goods which compels agreement as in the case of natural properties. It has already been suggested that these apparent failures to reach agreement upon matters of value are due not to predication of different qualities of the same objects, but to the difficulty in exactly defining the object which is in fact that upon which the valuation is passed. Rather than proving that value is subjectively definable and hence thoroughly relational and non-verifiable, there is reasonable evidence for the view that all are using an a priori concept in reaching that high degree of agreement which in fact exists, and in recognizing the divergencies where they exist. And further, that an essentially unique concept is being used for

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. i., p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

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reference is borne witness to by the fact that all the divergent attempts to define value by reference to desire, tendency, interest, appear to be converging upon some notion which is common to all, and which all fail quite to define in its essential meaning.

The normative a priori nature of the value concept is also shown, Professor Hartmann maintains, by the fact that we strive for the actualizing of values for the sake of which work and living have value. "But therein is conceded the apriorical reference of work to a value striven for; in this case the reference is to a value higher than that of life itself, a value which alone makes life 'valuable' and gives meaning to work. Only here does it become quite evident that appraisement of value precedes experience. For that which is striven for is still unreal, at least not yet 'experienced.'"<sup>1</sup>

This doctrine of apriorism is inherent in Dr. Moore's theory. His pioneering crusade against the "naturalistic fallacy," however, left analysis of the logical relations between the concepts "good" and "ought" much less fully developed than of the relationship between "good" and "right."<sup>2</sup> And there is an indication in a more recent work that Moore recognizes that a simple property doctrine of value over-simplifies the problem of the mode of characterization by which an object becomes, or is, a value. In a recent symposium<sup>3</sup> discussing the

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. i, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. his *Ethics*, Home University Library.

<sup>3</sup> *Phenomenology, Goodness and Beauty*. Supp. vol. xi, Arist. Society, p. 126.



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question "Is goodness a quality?" Dr. Moore explains that what he meant in *Principia Ethica* by saying that good denotes a quality was "merely that the character of being worth having for its own sake *was* a character and was *not* a relational property." He further expounds this somewhat non-committal "character" concept of property: "Mr. Joseph tells us that the goodness of God 'cannot be thought of as a quality, *which he might get or lose.*' This suggests that part of what he means by saying that the character of being worth having for its sake 'is not a quality,' is simply that it cannot be 'got or lost.' And so far as this is what he means, I completely agree with him."<sup>1</sup> That is, Dr. Moore regards goodness as a quality in the sense that if it does characterize an object it does so irrevocably while it is that object; and this perhaps elucidates the distinction which he made so fundamental in the argument of the *Principia*, the distinction between natural and ethical properties. A natural property need not be bound to the essence of an object as a natural object, as an ethical property must be bound to the essence of a good. A natural property may come and go in the time order without necessarily altering the essential character of its object, as a fruit in ripening changes from colour to colour. But value by an inherent logical a priori necessity must characterize goods. So long as they are in any sense ethical objects this character cannot be "got or lost."

<sup>1</sup> *Phenomenology, Goodness and Beauty*. Supp. vol. xi, Arist. Society, p. 126.

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This indicates an approach to the view expressed by Dr. Urban, that the contrast between valuational predicates and others lies in the distinction between predicates which refer to qualities which may be added to or taken from their objects and qualities which inhere in their objects by virtue of the totality of their other properties. "Value is then not an adjectival predicate," writes Dr. Urban, "but an attributive predicate. Because a thing is called valuable it has no new quality; it is precisely because of its qualities that it is valued. Its 'what' is raised into the sphere of value just as it might be into the sphere of existence. It is a predicate only in the sense that existence and truth are predicates."<sup>1</sup> It is in this sense that Dr. W. D. Ross refers to value as a toti-resultant property, claiming that whereas spatial, temporal and numerical properties "follow from part of the intrinsic nature of their possessors, value follows from the *whole* intrinsic nature of its possessors. . . . These attributes which are based on some single element in the nature of their possessors may be called parti-resultant properties. In contrast with these, value is a toti-resultant property, based on the whole nature of its possessors."<sup>2</sup>

But while in apparent agreement with Professor Urban on this point, Dr. Ross contests the view that beyond the value judgment that a thing is good there is a further and different value judg-

<sup>1</sup> *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, vol. xiii, pp. 459-60.

<sup>2</sup> *The Right and the Good*, p. 122.

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ment that it ought to be because it is good.<sup>1</sup> "Ought," Dr. Ross contends, "properly asserts an obligation, and it would be absurd to assert of, say, a state of pleasure or a beautiful object that it is under an obligation to be, or of a state of pain or an ugly object that it is under an obligation not to be."

To this question of the relation of "ought" to "value" we must return, but a question may be raised here as to the validity of the analysis which has been made by Dr. Ross. It is obviously absurd to assert of a state of pleasure, for example, that it is under obligation to be. But this is so, not because it is irrelevant to say of a state of pleasure that it "ought to be," but because obligation is not identical with "ought" either in its intension or in the objects to which it applies. "Ought" does not *assert* obligation, it *imposes* it; and this is true not because obligation is contained within the intension of "ought" but because to recognize that something ought to be is one of the conditions under which a moral agent is placed under obligation. Obligation is asserted when it can be relevantly asserted of anything that it "ought to be done," and this can be relevantly asserted only when there is a moral agent to whom significant conduct with reference to the value in question is possible. It may be assumed that the "ought to be" to which Dr. Urban refers is not the "ought" of obligation which is used when it is said of something that it "ought to be done." It is an "ought" which requires no reference to agency but is intrinsic in some such

<sup>1</sup> *The Right and the Good*, pp. 104-5.

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sense as Dr. Moore's "good" is intrinsic when it may be said that if a thing is intrinsically good "it would be a good thing that the thing in question should exist, even if it existed *quite alone*, without any further accompaniments or effects whatever."<sup>1</sup> So, in the case of Dr. Urban's use of "ought" it would appear possible to say that solely because a thing is good, if it be considered quite alone, then it "ought to be." The difficulty here is not that which Dr. Ross proposes, but it is due to the fact that no value does exist quite alone. Moreover, if, as Dr. Urban maintains, "the concept of higher and lower is inseparable from the value notion" then the predication of value to an object bears reference beyond that object-in-itself to its place in a series of values.

It appears evident, therefore, that a simple property doctrine of value leaves unsolved problems, and this is recognized by Dr. Moore in his treatment of "The Conception of Intrinsic Value" in *Philosophical Studies*.<sup>2</sup> He writes:

It seems to me quite obvious that if you assert of a given state of things that it contains a balance of pleasure over pain, you are asserting of it not only a *different* predicate, from what you would be asserting of it if you said it was "good"—but a predicate which is of quite a *different kind*; and in the same way that when you assert of a patch of colour that it is "yellow," the predicate you assert is not only *different* from "beautiful," but of quite a *different kind*, in the same way as before. And of course the mere fact that many people have thought that goodness

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophical Studies*, p. 274.

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and beauty were subjective is evidence that there is *some* great difference of kind between them and such predicates as being yellow or containing a balance of pleasure. But *what* the difference is, if we suppose, as I suppose, that goodness and beauty are *not* subjective, and that they do share with "yellowness" and "containing pleasure," the property of depending *solely* on the intrinsic nature of what possesses them, I confess I cannot say.

May the difference not lie in the fact that there is something in ethical predication which cannot be conveyed by the characterizing mode? The predication of value as a property reduces ethical predication to a form of simple and natural logical structure. It expresses ethical thought in a way capable of answering questions put in traditional form—what *is* this object? What properties *has* it? To say of an object that "it is good" answers an ethical question in this very simple form of assertive predication. It conveys meaning which is not invalid if its implications are conveyed with it; but the difficulty lies in the fact that it is apt to be taken to imply that in its characterizing mode everything which is involved in valuation by a moral being is expressed, implying that the ethical property possessed by an ethical object is its full ethical significance. But this is not the case, for in the world as we know it, and are part of it, the recognition of value does, in fact, impose obligation upon moral agents.

Value as characterizing an object as it is cannot, therefore, exhaust the ethical import of value as imposing obligation. This may be seen in

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another way in the fact that no realization of value can efface or overtake the "ought to be" ; for every value stands in an incompleted series in which each realization lays the foundations for a new obligation under the same imperative "ought," but with a new content. Moral consciousness giving rise to the question "What ought we to do?" involves three factors: the imperativeness of the "ought," the circumstances under which action under the imperative must take place, and in the third place the whole series of causal effects consequent upon what is done. The first of these is wholly a priori. The latter two include reference to the actual. But if their value-character were not also determined a priori, much as the geometrical character of every possible figure is determined a priori, there could be no significance in saying of any particular act that it ought to be done rather than some other.<sup>1</sup>

That value conceived as a property does not exhaust its import may also be seen in the fact that so conceived it is not the equivalent in meaning of value as imperative; for where two values are equally possible but not equal in value the higher value annuls the "ought" of the lower. And

<sup>1</sup> It scarcely need be pointed out that this a priori determination of the value-character of every value has no necessary relation to the predetermination of what object or act is in fact going to be actualized. In the first case the relation is essentially logical, in the latter it is essentially factual. Given certain teleological doctrines, a relation would be asserted. But Ethics does not require a metaphysical doctrine of teleology; though it may provide a premise for one.

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further, whereas value might by abstraction be conceived as characterizing reality for a being incapable of recognizing obligation, no "ought" can by abstraction be conceived as relevant in an order incapable of being characterized by value.

Value in its characterizing aspect may then be held to be a valid but incomplete form of ethical predicate. It is a form which is valid in somewhat the same sense as location in space without reference to time is valid. The property "locates" value as characterizing its object, but it fails to convey what is essentially involved in every moral situation, namely, that no vested value can claim for its object an ethical finality. This is true for two reasons; in the first place no object is as high a value as ought to be final; and in the second place no value can be final, for every value<sup>1</sup> is in process. At best the ought may give only temporary sanction to what is. Its full ethical import includes protest against the actual; and on its side the actual is ever declaring woe to those who are at ease in Zion. Kant realized this sense in which the good will alone can be what ought to be, for only in the good will does that which is and that which ought to be exactly and permanently coincide.

We may then turn to what has been referred to as the imperative mode to enquire as to the light it may throw upon the nature of ethical predication. And it may be noted at once that the form of predication itself stands contrasted to the characterizing assertive form. Why this latter mode should

<sup>1</sup> Value as substantive.

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have been adopted in ethical discourse, though the weaker mode, is not difficult to understand. The great prevalence of characterization by qualities in common discourse would in itself tend to establish the assertive form. And the "naturalistic fallacy" of the descriptive definition of indefinables by reference to the objects contained in their extension has a pedigree which is not wholly without honour. This, however, does not establish the actual priority of property consciousness in moral experience. Hartmann rather than Moore opens the problem of ethics where ethical consciousness asserts itself most effectively. Moore makes the primary question of ethical enquiry, "What is intrinsically good?" Every proposition which can rightly be called an ethical proposition is or bears reference to a proposition answering this question. It is probably more than merely a difference in method which leads Hartmann to introduce his analysis by means of the question "What ought to be done?", a question which is altogether secondary to Moore. For Moore, ethical propositions of the second class gain their whole ethical import through their reference to goodness. The ethical significance of rightness lies wholly in its causal reference to intrinsic goodness. On the other hand, while maintaining that the two questions "What ought we to do?" and "What is valuable?" interpenetrate, Hartmann begins his enquiry by means of the question "What ought we to do?" By this procedure, exactly opposite to that of Moore, he holds that "We may quietly pursue by



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itself the narrower and clearer problem of what ought to be done, without incurring the danger of ignoring the other and wider problem concerning the valuable in general.”<sup>1</sup> This reason for making the initial problem that of what we ought to do suggests that Hartmann sees the ethical situation not primarily as an abstract problem of the logic of notions but as one to which the surest approach is a phenomenological analysis of value through the consciousness of obligation under which it places us. That Moore recognizes the ultimate character of “ought” is clear. He writes: “However an authority be defined, its commands will be *morally* binding only if they are—morally binding; only if they tell us what ought to be or what is a means to that which ought to be.” And in the preface to the *Principia* he states the fundamental problem of ethical enquiry in terms of what “ought” to be. But it is, I think, fair to say that the property notion predominates in his doctrine. This probably accounts for his view of Ethics as culminating in casuistry whereas Hartmann claims that “Philosophical ethics is not casuistry and never should be.” For with Hartmann the ethical problem as it presents itself in moral consciousness is the problem primarily not of values to be logically graded with dialectical skill (though he seeks to make an elaborate comparative examination of values),<sup>2</sup> but of value seeking realization. Ethics is concerned not only with awareness of principles or values which are realized in the actual as are, for

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. i, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ethics*, vol. ii.

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example, geometrical properties; in Ethics there is a "demanding, commanding a priori"<sup>1</sup> based on the nature of value seeking to realize itself. Hartmann sees primarily the problem of the actualization of the ideal; and he maintains that "Valuational discernment and valuational effectiveness upon the real conduct and life of man are separated from each other only through freedom of choice."<sup>2</sup>

The ethical problem in its primary character arises, then, because of man's place in an order of reality to which his moral consciousness bears witness, as standing before the actual in which his action must take place, conscious of obligation to act under an imperative which cannot arise out of the actual as it is. Man must anticipate the future. He is in a process of which he is conscious, and within which he is not only a result, but a creative factor. For Ethics to be "contemplative, not normative" is thus, as Hartmann claims, contrary to the persistent insight which has led philosophy to expect to obtain "directive illumination" for actual living.<sup>3</sup> And in this situation his primary practical problem has to do with his action under an imperative "ought," and "ought to do" which in its nature is an anticipation and therefore cannot find its principle in what already is.

The discussion of the characterizing mode of ethical predication has revealed the naturalness of the use of this mode but also the fact that there are implications in the ethical situation which are not

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, vol. i, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52-3.

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adequately conveyed by an ordinary conception of property. Dr. Moore, in advocating the property doctrine of value, also finds the conception of an extraordinary property inadequate to wholly express what is involved in the predication of value. Dr. Urban has challenged the property doctrine and with Hartmann has found in the "ought" a concept apart from which the nature of intrinsic value cannot be adequately expressed. A similar view is taken by Professor A. E. Taylor who introduces, in the Symposium which has been referred to, the relation of teleology to value in a form which is suggestive for the present discussion. Dr. Taylor states that it seems misleading to refer to "good" and "bad" as qualities. "The only alternative way of expressing all that I mean when I call a thing good, I believe, is to say that the thing in question is what it *ought* to be, and it is the presence of this implication of an *ought* which makes it improper to treat the proposition *x is good* as being of the same type as *x is white* or *x is sweet*."<sup>1</sup> This change of expression from "good" to "ought" has important metaphysical implications for Professor Taylor. The nature of a person or thing which is good is "not merely to *have* certain characters, but to *tend to* a certain completion or fulfilment." To refer to "what ought to be" introduces a teleological reference into ethical predication and this is involved in the conception of reality as a *process*. Further, Professor Taylor maintains that the subjects of

<sup>1</sup> *Arist. Soc.*, Suppl. vol. xi, p. 151.

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judgments about good and bad are individual, a finite individual being a "complex of existence or actuality, and *essentia*, real possibility" and "the *essentia* is a factor, and ought to be the controlling factor, in its own actualization."<sup>1</sup>

Now it seems entirely true that any view of Ethics which disregards the fact of process must prove inadequate. But, granted this, how then is the relation of value to process to be conceived? Does the naturalistic character of the process *define* value? Any claim that it does leads to naturalism, unless there be a prior determination of process by value, and in this case it is not definition in the sense in which an intensional analysis of the concept is sought. It becomes merely descriptive in terms of the character of the process itself, not of its value determination. It may be held, however, that value *determines* process. This it may be held to do either (a) on a cosmic scale or (b) through individual personal conduct for ends. A belief that it has been cosmic in its scope is frequently part of religious faith, and it may include a doctrine of freedom of the will, claiming that this freedom has been given to moral agents for the sake of realizing moral value, without which the value-principle could not be realized completely within the process. To make place for free agents is, as it were, the final risk which Deity must take in a value-determined universe. Were it less, or other than a world with free beings it would have been more irretrievably less than it

<sup>1</sup> *Arist. Soc.*, Suppl. vol. xi, p. 156.

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ought to be, than it is under the personal teleology of imperfect individual wills.

(a) But regarding the general question of including a doctrine of teleology in ethical theory it may be said in the first place, with reference to cosmic teleology, that the task of Ethics must be the more humble one of conducting an investigation which may offer premises for a doctrine of cosmic teleology, rather than presuming to be one. For, in the second place, if process is, by hypothesis, wholly value-determined, then evidences of value are superfluous as arguments and are merely descriptive. But if process be not, by hypothesis, wholly value determined then the value of the process needs to be proved by reference to value, and hence cannot define value. The fact, it would seem, is that without a prior notion of value no process could be teleologically interpreted in any sense relevant to Ethics, and if process be found to be ethically significant it is by relating the a priori value concept to a process concept which is in itself entirely ethically neutral.

(b) Obligation does not arise because of man's metaphysical status, it constitutes that status. When therefore we consider the personal individual as a moral agent working for ends, process may be seen to be highly relevant to a world of values without being any part of the definition of value. It is obviously the condition of moral agency. Apart from change moral agency would be doubly impossible. But as known in actual experience this agency is both found within a

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changing order and effective through its own change-producing influence. It is this fact which makes it inconsistent with an account of moral agency to refer to value as having its full import exhibited through its characterizing nature. There must always be reference beyond what anything *is* if there is to be moral agency with its own particular values. This is not due to anything in the nature of process which makes it impossible for it to have properties, for a process need not become static to don its properties, but it is due to the nature of a moral process which makes it impossible that these properties should completely predetermine what is to be. And still, what "ought to be" must be determined *a priori* if alternatives are to present genuine moral issues, with the possibility of right or wrong decisions. That is, if in consciousness of moral obligation man has a valid consciousness of his place in the order of events, then the objective grounds for moral conduct must be reference to the actual and anticipation of possibilities as an order in which there is an *a priori* determination of that which ought to be and through his agency may be.

While the uniqueness of the mode of predication under which man's consciousness of obligation is expressed bears specific reference to an *a priori* order of values determined as a series under the ruling concepts "value" and "ought," and thus appears to refer to a transcendental order which is unrelated to actuality, there is no severance from the actual in the case of value which has not a

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parallel in other examples of the a priori. Number has already been appealed to for an analogy. Again, meaning is always transcendental in the sense that it is independent of its actualization in existence. At the same time it is comprehended in all rational experience; and the actual cannot be independent of meaning if it is to be intelligible. The strict apriority of a notion is no ground for regarding it as incapable of being actualized or verified in experience.

In what sense, then, may "value" and the "ought" be verified? In the ethical realm, Professor Hartmann points out,<sup>1</sup> conditions of verification by concrete reference corresponding to the concepts under consideration do not necessarily exist: "For values, although they are genuinely objective, are never laws of existence, they are not fulfilled in all actualities. The proof of their 'objective validity' therefore is not to be found in any agreement with the real. For discrepancy between them and the actual is by no means evidence against them." Indeed, as is shown in the case of "exemplars" where idealization of persons takes place, "indifference to the actual as regards the content and power of the ideal, is the strongest proof of the apriority of the evaluating sense."<sup>2</sup> Are we then shut off from the possibility of verification of the ethical by the very evidence by which its apriority is most assuredly established, namely, the persistent and constructive sense of value under which our striving continues in spite of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ethics*, vol. i, pp. 195-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ethics*, vol. i, p. 197.

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failure to actualize ideals? Must we do our striving and idealizing tongue in cheek? Or is ethical predication verifiable?

In the first place it may be said that the claim that the actual fails to realize ideal values is, in fact, often considerably overdrawn. This may be shown as follows: In claiming that there is an apriority of value and of a scale in which every value must have its position, no claim is made that an individual's knowledge of *a value* is necessarily a priori. The absoluteness of the relative positions in a scale of all possible values is an "objective" a priori condition of valid comparisons of values; but all comparisons must be a posteriori, for no value can be attributed to an unknown object. Failures to actualize Utopian states as ideal structures are, therefore, not evidence of the impossibility of actualizing value in the existent order, but they are evidence that value has been actualized, otherwise no known content could be given the concept of Utopia. Universal peace, for example, is an ideal extension of peace already known as a value in some measure. So with other goals toward which civilized communities strive. It may also be claimed that no small degree of the sense of actual disvalue is due to causes which have their roots in personal character rather than the conditions of life itself. This in no sense discounts the grave injustices under which many suffer; nor does it refer primarily to the more flagrant forms of vice under which disvalues flourish; what is referred to is the failure to enjoy the values at hand



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because of envy and misdirected striving which bring discontent where there might be satisfaction in the enjoyment of actual values.

The actual does not then necessarily fail to provide evidence of the objective reality of value. It rather offers the possibility of verification under definite and standardized conditions. But in doing so it demands the active participation of personal agents in the realization of the values which are sought. Man cannot verify value merely as a spectator; he must participate creatively in the very process in which verification is to take place, for the value which he seeks to verify, by its own character imposes obligation upon whosoever would know its essential import. By the nature of existent reality as a process and because of his own nature as a moral agent the verification of value rests upon the active participation of man in the progressive realization of value in the actual world of objective fact.

It should be noted that ethical verification is not alone in requiring the active participation of the investigator in the process of verification. This is true of experimental methods in general. But it has particular significance for ethical verification, for in the very nature of its subject-matter the objective value which is being verified becomes part of new value in being verified. This is due to the principle which Dr. Moore has referred to as the principle of organic wholes. Without in the least making the reality of a value subjective by being appreciated by a subject, a further value is realized

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when to the intrinsic value of a good there is added the appreciation of that value by a person. While, therefore, in ordinary verification it is possible to hold the object more or less isolated for observation, the very primacy of the valuational attitude makes the investigator's judgment upon the object part of a new "organic unity" which, in the process of the judgment itself, becomes a value. For example, when one in observing good conduct passes true judgment upon its goodness and feels the approval of it which accompanies that judgment, then the original act with the act of judgment and the feeling of approval constitute at the time of his valuation a new whole which has its own value and within which it is exceedingly difficult to isolate for valuation the original object as though it "*existed quite alone.*" That values are thus in the process of being made and unmade through the participation of persons in organic wholes of the highest value must not be taken as evidence that the essence of value is subjectively determined. The very opposite is the case, for were values not objectively founded there would be no ground for the judgment that organic wholes of which personal attitudes toward objects are constitutive parts are amongst the higher values. It does, however, add complexity to the general problem of ethical verification, for while an identical concept may be used in ethical judgments by different persons, or by the same person at different times, it is unusually difficult in the case of valuation to be certain that identical objects are being judged. An under-

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standing as to the actual objects which are referred to when valuations are being made is an attainment of civilization which is as yet but very partially realized.

Another factor adds complexity to ethical verification. It would at first appear that in the nature of the case ethical propositions in the characterizing mode are subject to verification as true or false in a sense in which those in a normative, imperative mode cannot be. A proposition predicting value as a property appears to bear direct objective reference to fact, as propositions affirming what ought to be or what ought to be done cannot do—even though such an affirmation may have objective grounds fully as absolute as any in the characterizing mode. It is with reference to its normative aspect involving the conception of “ought” that it seems especially necessary to draw the distinction which Dr. Urban has emphasized between existential predications and predications of value. “Value itself,” he maintains, “is merely valid. *That is* its objectivity.”<sup>1</sup>

The modest qualification “merely” must not however obscure the absoluteness of value in its normative or imperative mode. While unactualized values with their “oughtness” cannot be referred to as verifying value existentially, and while the value series in its apriority and absoluteness can be learned only, as it were, part by part through experience in which comparisons teach us to assign their relative places to values in the value

<sup>1</sup> *The Intelligible World*, p. 151.

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scale, still value exercises peculiar compulsion upon us as an ultimate form of validity which demands of us not only a characterization of the actual but an anticipation of the possible as a realm in which the actualization of value shall take place. The very efficacy of this anticipatory reference of the "ought" with its verification in actual values realized through moral agency is evidence that the cosmic order offers a sphere for the teleological activity of personal individuals and the ground for ethical objectivity.

There is verification of another kind for which modern ethical theory is providing criteria. One test of the objective validity of a concept is the identity of the conditions under which objects exist to which the concept applies. That these conditions cannot define certain concepts appears in the fact that a definition of this kind would be endlessly regressive, whereas some concepts must be ultimate terms of reference. The persistence and unlimited prevalence of the problems of Ethics, both practical and speculative, bear witness to the fact that some exceedingly fundamental concept or concepts are guiding ethical enquiry. It has been the contention throughout this discussion that the underlying concept of value and its related "ought" are indefinable. This, however, is not a contention that there are no *criteria* of value by reference to which its actuality may be verified in repeated experience and in the experience of others. While ultimate meaning may remain private in its primary intension, criteria

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may be made the basis of public recognition of identical meaning and common experience. It is with such criteria that many theories of value<sup>1</sup> seem, in fact, to be dealing. While failing to provide analytic definitions of value, or successfully to challenge its claim to apriority, and while using the intuitively apprehended import of the concept as a guide in an attempt to define it, all such theories are helping to elucidate another problem in offering as definitions of value what is really an analysis of the conditions of the verification of its objective validity.

<sup>1</sup> Most recently, and perhaps most successfully, Professor Perry and Professor Westermarck, in *General Theory of Value and Ethical Relativity*.

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